

## Super

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## Super

by [Lottiara](#)

### Summary

Two of the city's superheroes fight villains and protect the city whilst keeping their true identities a secret. They cannot even know the names of each other, their faces disguised by their magical jewels.

Dream is a flirty, cocky and impulsive hero with a sword and a smirk, never failing to cast witty and flirty remarks at his partner. GNotFound is clever and calculated, and can't stand being near the flirty masked hero.

Exams, friend groups, crushes, fights and prom should be their main stressors. But George and Clay barely have time to sleep, let alone focus on anything else.

None of that stops George from crushing hard on his classmate, but Clay's heart seems to be somewhere else. Perhaps with a certain masked hero he secretly spends nearly every day with.

Neither can escape the responsibilities on their shoulders, and they can't tell anyone their problems. The only person that could possibly understand what they are going through, is each other.

But they don't even know who that is.  
Which is Super inconvenient.

# Paper cuts are lethal

## Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever express they are uncomfortable with being shipped/fanfiction being written about them, I will take this down faster than dream's boat clutch.

Alsoooooo this work is inspired by the show miraculous, but is obviously completely different plot cause otherwise that would be hella boring

ALSO this work is on wattpad too under the same user

Enjoy :)

(all CWs and small TWs will be in the end notes to avoid spoilers, so check them first if you need. Otherwise all serious TW will be at the start xx)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**(02/07/2022) - IMPORTANT**

**Fuck cancer.**

**He was too good for this world. But as he always said, Technoblade never dies. His legacy will live on forever.**

**Please note, he is supervillain in this story. This was written before he even made the video about his cancer. I am considering taking down the story to change the villain, but part of me thinks as an English major he would have loved to know his character in a little story caused this much chaos. Then again, his character is up to interpretation in this story. He may not be as evil as assumed. At least not as bad as some other characters.**

**If this story disappears for a bit, that will be why, out of respect for him.**

**Thanks for understanding.**

Only George Davidson could manage to spill blood in his last period math class with Mrs Arley. To be fair, it wasn't exactly his fault. His daydreaming mind was far away in another reality, while his best friend Nick was waving the makeshift-sword around in the air.

"Stab. Stab. Stab." Nick said, prodding George in his chest, snapping the boy out of whatever fantasy land his mind was in this time. George pushed Nick away, and grabbed his sword made of pens and rulers taped together. George looked back at his friend with one of those looks.

"Why are you like this?" George sighed, putting the sword down on the table and picking up his own pen to continue writing notes from the board. He thought that was the end of it, until Nick prodded him once again with a new pen.

George grabbed the pen and confiscated that one too, without giving another glance to Nick. *He's just like a child. Don't give him attention.*

Stab

"Nick I swear to fucking god if you touch me one more time I'm going to stab you with something bigger and much sharper than a measly pencil." George said, holding up the pencil menacingly. Nick just grinned in return.

"Shhh. Mr Davidson, this is a warning." Mrs Arley said. George tensed his jaw and he lowered the pencil.

"Language." George heard a small voice from behind. He didn't bother turning to apologise to Darryl.

"You're a pain in the ass." George muttered. Nick chuckled in reply. However a few moments later, Nick poked George in his side. Nick of course knows George's weaknesses, this ticklish soft spot being one of them.

George let out a loud squeal in retaliation, and jumped away from Nick, resulting in his chair tipping and the boy landing on his butt on the ground.

The class erupted into laughter at the commotion, as George glared up at his so called "best-friend".

"That's it. Detention Mr Davidson. See me after school." Mrs Arley said. George silenced a groan of retaliation, and just sighed.

"You ok?" He heard a voice, and looked up to see a hand outstretched to him. Attached to this hand was a boy who made George's breath hitch.

"I'm...." George managed to say before he cautiously grabbed the extended hand of aid, and his breathing had shut down. He was pulled to his feet by the student, staring at the boy in front of him.

The boy in question raised an eyebrow.

"You're....?" He prompted George, who shook his head back into reality and pulled his hand away.

"Great. I'm-I'm great. Thanks, Clay." George winced. Clay flashed him a smile, running a hand briskly through his dirty blonde hair and taking his seat back down on the other side of the aisle.

George was still staring at the space where he stood. Was this a dream?

No, the sound of writing and silent despair snapped him out of his head, and reminded him he was in *math class*.

Everyone in the room was focused on their notebooks, barely giving a second glance to George after he was given detention. Except for Nick, who was grinning at his friend, watching the entire interaction between the boy and his overwhelming crush.

George quickly sat back down, staring at his notebook. It was then he felt a stinging come from the side of his hand. A paper cut. *I swear paper cuts bleed more than they should.*

"Smooth." Nick finally whispered.

"Oh shut up. I'm not talking to you. You landed me in detention, and look! Now I'm bleeding." George immediately whispered back, holding up his hand.

"Ok... one, that's a paper cut. It's tiny." Nick said. George shook his head. "You know how I am with blood!" George harshly whispered back. Nick rolled his eyes.

"And two, without me, you wouldn't have spoken to him." Nick whispered, but George quickly slapped a hand over his friend's mouth. The hand without the cut of course.

"Shut. Up." George sent daggers with his eyes. He could feel Nick's grin under his hand. And then something wet. George pulled away his hand in disgust. "Did you just.... lick me?" George asked in shock. Nick's devilish grin in reply was enough of an answer, and George chose to wipe his hand on Nick's shoulder.

"You should thank me." Nick said.

"For what? For licking my hand? For landing me in detention? For embarrassing me in front of the class? For stabbing me with your stupid toy sword? For causing me to *bleed*. No way." George said.

"Well... you did hold his hand." Nick said with a coy smile. George's eyes went wide, and he looked at his left hand. Which may have a cut, but thankfully wasn't the one Nick licked. *I held his hand. I held Clay's hand.*

"You are very welcome." Nick said, putting his hands behind his head and leaning back slightly in the chair. George rolled his eyes and hit him on the arm, quietly, of course.

George looked back to his left instead, across the aisle at the guy on the table group next to him. He had his tongue sticking out slightly in concentration as he tapped his pencil against his notebook. George let out a small sigh as he admired Clay from the small distance.

*Wow, I am creepy.*

George shook his head and looked back down at his work. But then the school bell rang, signalling the end of the period. Which also in this case, was the end of school.

The class simultaneously began to pack up their things and leave the classroom. George packed up extremely quickly in order to try and walk out of the door at the same time as Clay.

But before he could get out of his chair, a hand on his shoulder stopped him. He looked up to see the stern look of Mrs Arley.

"You have detention, George." She said. George didn't bother hiding his disgust. He groaned and dropped his bag back onto the floor. He crossed his arms over his chest and slumped in his chair, as the teacher walked back to her desk.

He stared longingly as Clay left the room, bag swung over his shoulder and his phone in his hand.

Nick gave George a pat on the shoulder, before skipping to the door. He gave him a small two-fingered salute and then left, jumping to hit his hand against the top of the doorway before leaving. George flipped him off under the table, which no one saw of course.

"You will not leave until you finish these worksheets." Mrs Arley said, placing the pieces of paper in front of George, who let out a sigh.

"It wasn't my fault, miss. Nick poked me where I'm ticklish and it scared me. And look, I'm bleeding out." George said, holding up his finger. Mrs Arley glanced at the cut.

"That's too bad. You will sit here under my watch until you finish them. And that's just a paper cut, George." She said. George sighed and put his chin on his hands and stared at the paper. It was math. More math.

The only sounds in the room was the ticking clock and Mrs Arley typing away at her computer. The ticking was slowly driving George insane.

15 minutes later, simultaneously, Mrs Arley's phone and George's phone went off and both individuals checked it. It was a red alert, one sent to all citizens in the city.

## **CODE RED**

**All citizens please keep inside, with locked windows and doors. Keep distance from an armed individual with the ability to freeze people**

George looked up at his teacher, who had wide eyes.

"Again? Why does this always happen in this stupid city." She said, then stood up from her desk, and looked at George. "I need to go check around the school, stay here and lock the windows and door behind me." She said, pointing at George. The boy nodded, a small smile on his lips with how easy this would be.

Mrs Arley left the room, and George immediately stood up, pulling the necklace around his neck so it was in front of his shirt.

He closed his eyes, and held the blank, white pendent.

"Mask on!" He said, and felt the tingling sensation immediately take over his body, starting with his toes and the tip of his fingers.

A power surged through him, and his hands balled into fists. Then he opened his eyes and looked down.

He was previously wearing a grey shirt and jeans, but was now in a blue supersuit, with varying shades of blue, and with a red and white box against his chest. The material extended all the way to his hands, covering his fingers, and to his feet. It reached up to his neck, but that was where the material ended. His previous chocolate brown hair was now a few shades darker, almost completely black. It was ruffled and messy, but out of his face.

George always thought his costume was kind of ugly... but it was practical and hid his identity.

The pendent that was blank and hidden before, was now sitting comfortably against his chest, a blue sapphire gem now in the pendent, visibly sparkling in the light.

George brought a hand to his face, finding his signature large white-rimmed goggles covering the top half of his face and making it impossible to see his eyes.

He reached for his right wrist, where a rubber band lay. He pulled it off, and in one swift motion, he snapped the band, and it transformed into a bow. It was big and wooden, with carvings along it.

George brushed a finger along the wood, smiling to himself. But his smile quickly disappeared when he remembered why he had needed to transform.

George ran to the window, opened it up, and jumped out of it, landing softly on the ground. He looked up and stretched his arms, before sprinting away.

He loved the feeling, the wind blowing against his face, and the ability to dodge things with ease with his heightened agility. It was easier to jump, too. George could jump higher than usual and dodge much faster.

It's always easy to find the commotion in the city. The villains and foes and problems always like to make themselves known. They caused chaos. Sometimes for fun, but sometimes to purposely draw the superheroes towards them. There are a lot of people who want George's power, and will do anything to get it.

George looked up, deciding height would give him a better advantage. With ease, the boy in the blue suit leapt from the ground, to a tree, and then to the top of an apartment.

"Hot." George heard a voice, and immediately snapped his head behind him, holding his bow ready, an arrow magically appearing in his grasp.

At the end of the bow, George was met with a smiley face. Not a real one, though. George hated the mask more than anything. It covered almost the entirety of the man's face, but was cut off at the bottom, only leaving his mouth free. Like George, the yellow, no, *green* suit covered his body from his fingers and feet, extending up until his neck. His hair was bright blonde, spiking up in every which way like it had a mind of its own.

The masked man at the end of George's bow was standing against a brick chimney crown, with his arms crossed against his chest, as if the threatening stance of George wasn't bothering him at all. On his third finger on his right hand was a ring, with a bright jewel.

They may be a team at times, but that doesn't mean George had to *like* him and his obnoxious manner and stupid smirk.

"Dream." George said, and the man in the smiley mask smirked more.

"You going to lower your bow, G? Or are we going to stand like this all day?" Dream asked, and George reluctantly lowered his bow, the arrow disappearing.

"Wait, did you say *hot*?" George asked Dream, who just winked in reply.

"Whatever. What's the assessment?" George asked. The flirting thing Dream does was just to get on his nerves.

"Why do we only ever meet in emergencies? Why can't we just have a nice chat." Dream whined, taking a step closer to George, who scoffed in reply.

"Someone is freezing people, we don't have time to *chat*. Not that I even want to talk to you anyway. Come on." George said, turning and running away from Dream.

"We have plenty of time. I'll defeat the bad guy in like two minutes anyways. I'm just that good." Dream said, as he ran alongside George, both jumping over the gap between buildings in sync. George scoffed.

"You're so humble." He said sarcastically, turning towards the road, getting a good run up, and then he jumped over the street to the building on the other side.

It was also an attempt to get away from Dream, which worked well for a moment.

But something yellow suddenly appeared in front of George as he was running, grabbing him around the waist and abruptly stopping him. The impact made him and the man in front of him fall over, George landing on his back, and Dream landing on top of him.

The mask inches away from George's goggles.

"Dream? What the fu-" A hand was slammed over George's mouth, and Dream's other finger rose to his lips, indicating for George to be quiet.

It was then that George realised how close they were. He could feel Dream's breath against his face. Well, the part of his face that wasn't hidden.

George looked into Dream's eyes. It was strange that he could see them through the mask, since Dream couldn't see his. They were yellow to George, but he knew they were probably green. Curse his colourblindness.

"Do you hear that?" Dream whispered. George tuned in to the sounds around them.

It was a zapping sound, and George could even hear laughter. His eyes narrowed as he listened. It was a woman's laughter.

"You know, I don't mind this. You're quite comfortable." Dream said, snapping George back to his surroundings.

George immediately pushed Dream off, and peered over the edge of the rooftop. Below, in the street, was a figure of some sort standing on a board that was moving through the air. It was a hoverboard, and the person riding it was dressed head to toe in white clothing, their black hair spiked up like they were insane. It was a woman, George could tell. She had a black visor covering the top half of her face, and she was cackling as she drifted through the street.

George looked in the direction where she came, and saw civilians standing in the street. George's first thought was to get them to safety... until he realised they weren't moving. They were standing up, but they were frozen in place. The terrified looks stuck on their faces.

As if on cue, the villain pointed her finger at someone watching in a window, and a white beam of light shot towards them, hitting them square in the chest. Her laughter that followed made George fill with anger.

George turned back to Dream, who pulled a pen out of a pocket. He smiled at George, as he clicked the end of the pen. The small object suddenly transformed into a long sword, similar to George's rubber band.

"We have to cut her off. Don't let her point at you, dodge the beams. She has supernatural powers, so I'm guessing it's another jewel scenario again. Find her gem and destroy it. Can you tell where the gem is?" George said to Dream, who turned back to the figure going down the street.

"Bracelet. Do you see the clear stone on her right wrist?" Dream pointed. George looked closely. He could now see the bracelet, with a clear gem embedded into it, sparkling in the sunlight.

"What gem it?" George asked.

"You're asking me? Aren't you the nerd?" Dream said.

"Well I can't tell. There are lots of clear jewels. It could be diamond. Or quartz." George said.



"It's not important what type, let's just defeat the villain." Dream said, cracking his knuckles.

"Aren't you curious as to what all the gems mean? Dozens of people we fight have a jewel, the source to their powers. Even us." George said, gesturing to Dream's ring and his own pendent.

"So? Does it matter?" Dream said.

"It could be important. I've been trying to keep track of what villains had what gems." George said, glancing at Dream's ring. He had the Emerald, and George had the Sapphire.

"Can do your nerdy research later? This bitch is freezing people and we don't have all day." Dream said.

"Ok, fine." George said, looking back down to the street. The lady had gone to the next one.

"Don't make the same mistake as last time. Don't be reckless, Dream. Saving your ass is an inconvenience for me." George said. Dream just smirked and stood up.

"Oh come on, G. I'm not that reckless."

"Sure." George said, before jumping off the side of the building, grabbing a pipe with his left hand and quickly sliding down it to the road.

Dream from above smiled to himself as he watched his partner gracefully land on the ground. Before he too, made his dismount from the roof, choosing to jump to a power pole and slide down it, meeting George once again as they ran down the street.

They could hear the evil laughter as they rounded the corner. George held his bow up, an arrow magically appearing in his hand, and Dream held up his sword. The lady in white turned to face them, and let out another laugh.

"He warned me about you two. Said you would get in my way. Dream and GNotFound. What lousy names." She said. The pair had to choose their names on the first day they became superheroes. Dream decided his without hesitation. George may have panicked a bit and thought of a username he had as a child.

"Well what's your name then?" Dream asked her. She smiled.

"That's a secret." She said, then pointed right at him. A flash of white light shot towards the duo, who both jumped out of the way, managing to dodge it.

George rolled away and got on one knee, closing one eye as he aimed his bow and shot an arrow. It narrowly missed her dark spiked up hair. But she pointed at George and sent another beam. He rolled behind a car out of the way.

Dream was behind a dumpster, but he got up and started charging at her, his sword out in front and determination hidden by the mask.

Shot after shot was fired at him, none of which hit as he dodged while sprinting. George peered out from behind the car, and shot another arrow.

The villain was preoccupied with Dream, but saw the arrow coming. She pointed at it, making it freeze in the air, and then she used her hoverboard to dodge Dream's attack with his sword, making him stumble forwards with his momentum.

"He told me I had to be careful of you both, but turns out you aren't actually that good." She laughed.

"Who's he?" George yelled, running from out behind the car, shooting an arrow. She sent five beams towards him, but he jumped, ducked and dodged them all, running over to Dream who was behind a different car. They both had their backs pressed against it.

"The one who gave me my gem. He gave me a few jobs to do with it." She said.

"What jobs?" Dream called out. "I tried getting closer but she's fast with her hoverboard." He then whispered to George.

"Oh just a few. One of which being to take both your gems." The lady sang.

"Good luck doing that." Dream called out. He then started to rub his hands together. George quickly realised what he was going to do. George grabbed Dream's hands pulling them apart.

"Not yet. We need a plan first." George whispered. Dream scoffed, and proceeded to pull away from George, rub his hands together, and then put them on his temples anyways.

"Project!" Dream said, and shot his hands out in front of him. George watched as a collection of shadow and light fused together, creating a person kneeling right in front of them. The person looked up and smirked at George, who tensed his jaw in anger.

There were now two Dream's. One, sitting on George's left leaning against the car door. The other, kneeling in front of them.

"Dream!" George was about to get angry, but before he could say anything more, both Dream's jumped up and ran out from behind the car. George jumped up too, holding out his bow.

Both Dream's began to run at the villain, who stood there shocked for a moment, before shooting her beams at them.

George groaned, trying to line up a shot, but there was too much movement, and he was worried he would hit Dream, whichever one was the real one.

George snapped away his bow, it becoming a rubber band on his wrist once again, and he ran towards the commotion as well.

Dream's power is *Projection*. He can create an illusion of himself, which acts and communicates in the exact same way he would. Except it cannot be touched and cannot actually harm anyone. It's used purely as a distraction. If it gets hit, whether by another person or thing, it will disappear. The illusion also only lasts for two minutes, or until it gets hit. Which is why George wanted Dream to wait.

Once they use their power, they get a countdown until they automatically change back. Dream doesn't have as much time now, before he has to leave. Only several minutes before everyone finds out the identity of him.

George sprinted at the villain, somersaulting over a beam that was shot right at him. There was a Dream on his right, wielding his sword as he tried to run around to behind the woman. The Dream on his left, was dodging the beams, trying to get closer to her.

Suddenly a beam of light hit the Dream on his left square in the chest, making George gasp.

But then he disappeared, and George realised quickly that it was the projected Dream that was hit. He turned his attention back to the woman, but was too late to dodge the beam coming straight for his face.

George crossed his arms across his chest, and shot them outwards, yelling "Shield!" A blue light covered George from all sides, absorbing the beam of light and making his world turn muffled for a moment.

George's power is *Shield*. He can use it once for no longer than a minute. But now he also has less time before he changes back.

With his shield still up, and one hand out in front of him, George ran forward, towards the villain. She shot beam after beam at him, but the forcefield was absorbing the impact of all of them.

George jumped up into the air above her, and in one swift motion, he let the shield go, snapped his rubber band, and coordinated a shot, managing to bury itself into her arm.

The villain fell backwards off the hoverboard, just as George landed on top of her, grabbing her arms, and laying them flat against the pavement. She tried to get up, but George was stronger. She tried shooting beams, but couldn't aim them at George.

"Dream, I need a hand!" George called out, as the lady squirmed beneath him, desperately trying to point at him.

He felt a presence next to him, and Dream reached for the bracelet on her left wrist.

"Wait!" George said, as Dream was about to pull it over her hand, but at the last moment, his wrist got in the line of sight of her finger and he was hit with a beam.

Dream froze next to George, the bracelet still on her wrist. She laughed, looking back up at George. He was having trouble holding her still.

"Good luck getting it off." She said. George looked around, trying to think of ideas. His partner was frozen, and George saw Dream's ring flash twice, meaning he only had five minutes before changing back.

"He'll change back, and then I won't even need to collect his gem. I can just expose Dream's identity to him. It would be easier for him to take when Dream is an unsuspecting, powerless civilian." She said.

"Who is he? Who do you keep talking about?" George asked.

"I'm sure you've heard of him, everyone has." She said. George looked at her, waiting for her answer.

"Blade. Blade gave me my jewel." She said. George's eyes went wide. Blade.

**One of the best people. Fuck cancer.**

He didn't have time to process it, he had to get out of this sticky situation.

George analysed the scenario. Buried in her right forearm was the arrow wound, still sticking out of it. George noted she was weaker in this arm, barely trying to fight, and only shooting a beam occasionally. The bracelet was on her left arm. To take it off, it's about speed. Do it before she can send a beam. Rip it off like a bandaid. Her reflexes aren't that refined, especially if she's focused on

something else.

Something like pain.

Within a split-second, George moved his hand holding down her right arm, and before she could think to move her own hand and point at him, he grabbed the arrow, pushing it deeper into her skin, making her scream in pain. George quickly reached with his right hand, grabbing the bracelet on her left and ripping it off her wrist, pulling his hand back. She didn't even send a beam, her eyes were closed in agony.

As soon as the bracelet was removed, she changed. Her white outfit disappeared, replaced with a normal blue blouse and black pants. Her visor which was covering half her face also disappeared.

George put the bracelet into one of his pockets, and then turned his attention back to the woman. He didn't recognise her, but she looked completely normal. She was powerless now. George moved back, letting her lie there.

George felt movement beside him, and looked to see Dream.

"That was awful. I had the worst itch on my face but I couldn't scratch it." He said, rubbing his chin. George punched him in the shoulder, taking Dream by surprise.

"What the hell, Dream? I told you don't be stupid. You used your projection too soon." George said, standing up. Dream looked down at his ring, and the flashing caught George's eyes too.

"Shit, I have to go." He said, standing up. "It's buzzing. That means I have a minute." Dream said, his voice starting to panic as his ring flashed and buzzed rapidly.

"Just go. I'll deal with this. I have a bit longer than you." George said, pushing Dream away.

"It was a smart move, though. I distracted her." Dream said.

"It wasn't needed. You wasted it. You act too quickly, without thought. You need to think things through, and listen to me more." George scolded him.

"I like it when you're mad." Dream said, his smirk clear as day below his mask. George scoffed.

"Did you even hear what I said?" George asked.

"G." Dream clapped his hands together like he was begging, and George assumed that was a no. "Would you please be my boyfriend?"

"No. I'd rather die. I will never, ever be your boyfriend." George responded with a roll of his eyes. "Will that ever get into your head?"

"Nope. But gotta go. See ya next time, G. Maybe we will have more time to chat." Dream said, waving before he ran away, climbing up the building and disappearing across the roof tops.

George clenched his fists, turning back to the woman. George sighed, and peered over her.

"Where is Blade?" He asked. She opened her eyes.

"GNotFound? What are you doing here?" She asked. George rolled his eyes.

"Where is Blade?" George asked again.

"What? Why would I know? Can you please help me?" She asked. George narrowed his eyes.

"He gave you the gem. You met him. Tell me." He said. George felt a buzz and looked down at his chest. His pendant flashed at the same time as the two quick buzzes. He has five minutes.

"Gem? What gem? Who did I meet? Ow, please help." She said. George bent down and picked her up. She was bleeding bad.

"Don't lie." He said, beginning to jog.

"I'm not lying. I have no clue what you're talking about." She said. George's eyebrows furrowed. She did seem like she was telling the truth.

Did she forget? How? How much has she forgotten?

"What do you remember last?" He asked.

"I remember I was walking home from work, I was tired and just wanted to go home. I remember a voice and then that's it. I woke up here, an arrow in my arm. What happened?" She asked.

George didn't respond. He got around another street, when he was finally met with emergency crew and the police.

"It's GNotFound!" Someone said, and some news reporters came running over. George made his way to the paramedics though. They immediately took the woman and tended to the arrow.

"Is this the individual who was freezing people?" A cop asked. George nodded.

"Yep. She's powerless now though, but says she has no memory of anything. That's not normal for her to lose her memory after I take the powers. Normally they remember and still try to fight even without superpowers. But her and the past dozen villains all claim to not remember anything. I thought it was a trick, but now I'm starting to think maybe there's more to it." George said.

They nodded, taking notes. "Could you do a lie detector test on her?" George asked. One of them nodded. "Great. Let me know what the results are. Because this is starting to get really weird." He said.

It's funny how much influence he has in the police department. Well, he basically does their jobs for them.

"GNotFound! Over here! Have a moment?" A reporter asked, a camera shoved in George's face.

"Uhh..." George panicked.

"What happened this time? How did you save everyone again? Where's your partner, Dream?"

"Uh, well. A woman had the power to freeze people but we took it away. Everything is back to normal, everyone who was frozen can move again. Dream is fine, he had to change back. And now I also must. Sorry, but I have to go." George said, waving politely at the reporter and camera, before jogging away. He was still quite fast, but couldn't exert too much of his super speed since he was about to change back.

George liked to travel on the rooftops, it was harder for him to be tracked. He made his way towards the school, finding an empty alleyway, and jumping into it.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the bracelet. The gem was still sparkling. He looked at it

closely. It wouldn't be diamond. Possibly quartz? He would check it out later.

His pendent on his chest began to start buzzing eratically. He had a minute. George sighed.

"Mask off." He said, and felt the tingling sensation rise from his hands and feet to the rest of his body.

He looked down at himself. Now he was back in his grey shirt and jeans. He was back to normal. He was back to being George Davidson, a high school student.

His pendent was now blank, no sign of a jewel. And it was grey. When the jewel is worn without the power activated, it stays blank to prevent people from easily identifying it. But when no one is wearing it at all, it displays the gem. If George took off his pendent, the sapphire would be seen, only not as bright. When the pendent is white, it's power has recharged. When it's grey, George cannot transform. He has to wait for it to recharge before he can transform back again.

He didn't understand it. And George didn't understand what these gems importance was to everything. He was nothing without his sapphire. There seem to be many gems that each give different powers to people. How do they work? Magic?

George put the bracelet from the woman into his jean pocket, and casually walked out of the alley, towards the school.

Now he needed an excuse for why he left the school lock down. Maybe he was feeling lightheaded from the paper cut.

## Chapter End Notes

CW// blood, swearing

Thanks for checking out the first chapter! Wattpad has more chapters up currently but they will all be brought over eventually.

Also hi I'm Lottiara but you can call me Lottie. I'm Australian so if I spell things different or get American things wrong i'm sorry in advance lol

Twitter: @LottiaraT

**for the third time, this is inspired by miraculous. so can people quit accusing me of being inspired by the show when i literally said that bahahah.**

**learn to read nerds.**

**plus it's barely even close to miraculous after three chapters. quickly becomes more mature i promise. i swear it's not this cringe, i wrote this over a year ago and my writing has improved**

**anywayssss enjoy the chaotic slowburn bitches. if you finish this in a day you're  
crazy**

# Nothing is worse than a group project

## Chapter Summary

George is forced into a biology project group with his chaotic best friend and crush

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"How was detention, loser?" Nick asked George the next day. George slammed his locker closed and turned to his best friend.

"You should have been in detention, not me." He said, leaning against the lockers with his arms across his chest.

"Did you see the news? Or were you still in detention?" Nick asked.

"I was still in detention." George said. And, he had managed to get back to his classroom before his teacher realised he was gone.

"Damn, you missed it. Dream and GNotFound fought some crazy person freezing people with her fingers. It was insane." He said.

"Oh really."

"Yeah! Man, I wanted to watch but it was too far from my house. I watched the live coverage though. GNotFound spoke to the reporters, but Dream had to go before he changed back or something." He said.

"Ah cool." George said, not really paying much attention.

"So cool. I wish I was a superhero. How fun would that be?" Nick said. George shook his head.

"You want to be one? Why?" George asked, perplexed.

"Well, obviously it would be so fun. And I'd be cool and fast." He said, doing a superman pose. George rolled his eyes.

"I think it would be exhausting. Having to live a double life, you'd never get time for yourself, and also the stress of keeping your identity hidden." He said.

"You're thinking about it too much." Nick laughed.

"Hey, sorry George, do you mind if I just get to my locker?" A voice interrupted their conversation.

George immediately jumped away from the locker, so he was next to Nick.

"S-sorry." George said. Clay smiled.

"All good." He said, proceeding to unlock his locker. George stood there staring at him as he did, a



silence surrounding the three of them.

Nick cleared his throat.

"So, George. We should get to biology." Nick said, pulling on George's sleeve. George snapped out of his daze, a blush forming on his cheeks, nodding to Nick.

The pair started to walk away, but Clay stopped them. "Wait, I'm in the same class as you two. Mind waiting so I don't have to walk alone?" He asked. George and Nick turned back around. George had stopped breathing, and Nick noticed.

"George?" Nick whispered, nudging his helpless friend.

"Uh um yeah I mean if you want but you don't have to because it's not like we care but if you want to then uh yeah sure up to you." George spluttered out, his face growing deeper shades of red as he spoke.

Nick silently facepalmed at the waterfall of words spoken by George. Clay was busy zipping up his bag and closing his locker.

"Cool, thanks." Clay said, turning to the pair with a smile and joining them. Nick pulled George's sleeve again to make him unfreeze and start walking again. He also put himself on the left of George, since Clay was on George's right.

*If George won't initiate things with Clay himself, I'll have to interfere.* Nick thought with a devilish grin.

But the trio walked through the halls in complete silence. George was staring at his feet, as if he was trying to convince himself he wasn't standing next to his crush.

"So. Uh. Clay, did you see the fight yesterday?" Nick asked, trying to think of some small talk.

"I heard about it." Clay said simply.

"It was so cool. I mean, like, bad, cause like, evil, but like... cool." Nick said, making Clay chuckle.

"Yeah, I think it's cool." Clay said.

"What do you think about being a superhero? I would love to be one." Nick said.

"Me too. I think it would exhilarating. Being someone else and no one knowing you in real life. I think it would be like an escape." Clay said.

"See George? Clay agrees with me." Nick said, nudging George, who was still very interested by the floor. George just nodded.

They reached their classroom, and went inside. The entire class was already seated, in groups.

"Nick, Clay, George. You three are late. I just explained the project to everyone. It's a group assignment, and since you are late, you are a group. Take a seat." Mr Peterson said, pointing to an empty table.

George wanted nothing more at that moment than to fall through the floor and disappear forever. He had to work on a project with *Clay*. This was equally his biggest dream and worst nightmare in one.

The three sat down at the table, dropping their bags on the floor.

"So as I was saying. Your project is a group experiment. You will conduct the experiment together during lessons, and then write up reports individually. You will be measuring the growth of a small organism over a period of time by changing either its environment or nutrients. Or any other ways you can choose to alter the original experiment. Today, you will just be deciding on a research question together, experiments will begin to be conducted over the next week or two." Mr Peterson said. "Nick! Stop that sound now."

"What?" Nick asked innocently, putting his keys back on the desk. Mr Peterson rolled his eyes.

But George was completely zoned out. He was focused on not staring at Clay, instead staring intently at his pencil.

This was going to be an interesting few weeks.

The classroom filled with noise as groups began to discuss amongst themselves.

"I hope you guys don't mind I'm with your group." Clay finally said.

"It's fine with us. Sorry you aren't with your friends." Nick said. Clay glanced over at the group on the other side of the room. The group consisting of Wilbur, Niki, Karl and Fundy.

"I don't mind. I may not sit with you guys or hang out, but we've been in the same classes for a year, it's not like we are strangers." Clay said with a smile.

"That's true." Nick said.

"Besides, I think the maximum group number is four, so I wouldn't be with them anyways." Clay shrugged.

"Oh, but why would it be you?" Nick asked.

"Well, I moved here a year ago. Everyone has been friends since middle school, or even elementary. It's not that they don't like me, it just works out like this sometimes." Clay explained. George was looking at Clay now, and felt a small stab in his heart. It doesn't feel good to be a second choice.

"That sucks." Nick said. Clay shrugged again.

"It doesn't bother me. We are still good friends." He said.

"Have you three come up with a research question yet?" Mr Peterson said, appearing at the desk.

"Excuse me sir you interrupted our conversation. Clay, continue please." Nick said, making the teacher give him a glare.

"Mr Armstrong." Mr Peterson warned.

"What?"

"One more warning and you'll be in detention." He said. Nick groaned.

"It was just a joke, sir."

"Clay, George, has your group got a research question yet?" Mr Peterson ignored Nick, who

crossed his arms over his chest and muttered to himself.

"Not yet, what's the organism we are investigating?" Clay asked.

"It's on the sheet in front of you, Clay. I passed out the original experiment you are modifying. *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Also known as yeast. Read the experiment." Mr Peterson said, annoyed, before he walked away.

"Whoops, I didn't realise." Clay laughed, moving the piece of paper towards himself to read. George looked at Nick, a pleading look in his eyes.

*Nick, how am I supposed to do this for a week?* George thought, and Nick seemed to understand, replying with a somewhat confusing mixture of facial movements. *It'll be fine.* George shook his head back. The silent conversation going unnoticed by Clay.

"So what do you guys think?" Clay asked, looking up and sliding the paper towards George. He carefully took it and skimmed through the writing.

"We could change the glucose concentration, see the effects of an increase in nutrients on the yeast." George said, contemplating the experiment. "Or we could alter the temperature we store the solution at." He added, looking back up. He awkwardly leaned back in his seat when he realised the other two were both looking at him.

"You said a bunch of words I don't know, but my answer is yes." Nick said.

"It's a choice, not a yes or no, idiot. Glucose concentration or temperature?" George said.

"I think glucose concentration would be easier to monitor than temperature, right?" Clay said. George stared at Clay.

"Yes, let's do the easy one." Nick said, kicking George under the table to snap him out of it.

"O-okay." George stammered, pushing the experiment away from him and instead fiddling with his fingers.

The rest of the lesson, Clay and Nick talked about random things, beginning with small talk and ending with minecraft. George was somewhat listening, more like staring at Clay while he talked.

"Have you beat the game?" Nick asked Clay, who nodded.

"Yeah, I play it a lot. I time myself too, speed-running the game to see how fast I can complete it." Clay said.

"Nice, I don't time myself but I like trying to beat it." Nick asked. Clay turned to George.

"What about you, George? Play minecraft?" Clay asked.

"Oh, he-"

"Yeah. All the time, I'm obsessed." George said. His chin was rested on his hand as he watched Clay.

"Really? We should all play together sometime, on a realm or server or something." Clay said. George slowly nodded, a wide smile on his face.

The bell rang, and Clay got up first, grabbing his bag.

"Thanks for being in my group, I'm kind of excited for this project. And for playing minecraft." He said with a smile and a wave, before jogging over to his friends.

Nick turned to George, who was still smiling, his eyes following Clay. Nick punched George on the arm, and it snapped the boy out of it.

"What." George said.

"You are so fucking whipped." Nick laughed. George scowled and grabbed his bag.

"Whatever." He said. Nick grabbed his bag too.

"No, seriously. You weren't even listening, just staring at him. And you just agreed to play minecraft with us. You don't even have minecraft." Nick said. George's eyes went wide, and Nick led him out of the room.

"I agreed to that? Oh God. I used to play, when I was like ten. He's not going to hold us to that is he? I can't remember how to play." George said, putting his hands on his temples as they walked through the halls.

"You said you play all the time, and that you're obsessed." Nick said. George groaned. "The only thing you're obsessed with is him." Nick added with a laugh.

"I hate myself. Nick, I can't be in a group with him. I can't even hold a simple conversation with him!" George said.

"It's fine! This is a good opportunity. You said he has no clue who you are, which is just plain wrong. But now you can get to know each other, maybe something will happen? You could tell him you like him, see where it goes." Nick said in a cheerful tone.

"I can't do any of that! I'm never telling him I like him. Nothing will happen. He's not gay, Nick." George said.

"You don't know that." He responded.

"I do. He's had a girlfriend, remember? And the chances of him being bisexual are low. More girls are bisexual than boys." George said.

"Well, that's not necessarily true either. More bisexual girls have come out. That doesn't mean there aren't less bi guys. Also, he could be completely gay and using his ex girlfriend to convince himself and/or others that he is straight, when reality he is not." Nick said. George turned to his friend.

"Since when have you become knowledgeable in the minds of LGBTQIA+ people?" George said. Nick shrugged.

"Well, when you told me you were gay, a few years ago, I wanted you to know that I supported you, so I did some research about the community. That's how I found out that more girls appear bisexual, but more bisexual guys just don't come out due to fragile masculinity." Nick said. George smiled and hugged Nick, taking him by surprise.

That meant a lot to George.

"But yeah, you don't know for sure Clay is straight. Don't lose hope." Nick said, as George let go and they continued walking.

"I just don't think he gives off gay vibes." George said, and Nick laughed. The pair entered the cafeteria, and began to walk to their table.

"What, is your gaydar perfect?" Nick said.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I am great at reading people." George said.

"Whatever. You're just so in love with Clay, I think you should tell him eventually. Before it kills you." Nick said. George scoffed.

"Love? I'm not in love with anyone. And I'm not telling him, he barely knows me." George said. Nick and George both sat down at the table.

"I think it's love." Nick said to George.

"Love? Who's in love?" Darryl asked from George's left.

"No one." George replied.

"George is in love." Nick said, in a sing-song voice.

"Shut up."

"With who?" Zak asked.

"No one. Eat your stupid sandwich, Nick." George glared at his friend, who happily took a bite.

"Where are the others?" George asked.

As if on cue, three people sat down across the table.

"You'll never guess what Miss Nesbit did! That BITCH gave me an extra sheet of homework to do at home because I was "being disruptive" during class. Like what the fuck?" A blonde headed boy yelled, as he slammed his tray of food on to the table.

"Language, Tommy!" Darryl scolded him.

"To be fair, you were throwing paper airplanes around the classroom." The brunette next to him said.

"That's not even that disruptive, Tubbo!" Tommy said to Toby. No one calls him Toby, though.

"It was so peaceful and quiet until you headaches showed up." George said, rubbing his eyes as if he was tired. Granted, he was.

"What the fuck did I do to you, George? I'm not a headache, am I?" The third boy, Alex said.

"Language! Quackity!" Darryl said. No one was sure where Quackity originated from either, but it's stuck.

"You are also loud." George said.

"I know what could help with your headache." Quackity said with a smirk, leaning forward, opening up his jacket.

"I don't want your sherbet, Quackity! Quit acting like a drug dealer, you store sugar in your pockets." George said. Quackity frowned at George and sat back in his seat.

"Hey, sherbet is very popular and there is a low supply at the moment, I'm helping out my fellow classmates." He said.

"There is a low supply, because you keep hoarding it all from the stores in the city!" George rebutted.

"Genius, right?" Quackity smirked. George just shook his head at him.

"Oi! Wilbur!" Tommy suddenly called out to a passing boy. The tall brunette stopped and looked at Tommy, walking closer. George liked Wilbur, he was nice, and has had classes with him since middle school.

"What do you want?" Wilbur said to Tommy. George was taken aback by his abruptness to the sophomore teen. Tommy just smiled.

"I just wanted to say hello." Tommy said.

"Well, goodbye." Wilbur said.

"Wait, Will! Is Phil picking us up or are you driving me home?" Tommy asked.

"Phil is picking us up." Wilbur said, and then walked away. George watched as he walked to a nearby table. George knew he would walk to that one, because he always does. And George stares at this table a lot. Well, at a particular person a lot.

"Who's Phil?" Skeppy asked Tommy.

"Well, I guess *technically* he's my father." Tommy said.

"Wait, what?" George asked, tearing his eyes away from Clay's beautiful side profile.

"You call your Dad by his actual name?" Darryl asked.

"Well, he adopted us. I don't know, I guess I've just always called him Phil." Tommy shrugged, taking the juice box and sipping from it.

"Who is us?" Nick asked.

"Me and Wilbur. He's my brother." Tommy said.

"You're Wilbur's younger brother? How come I didn't know that?" George said.

"We haven't been friends for that long, I guess family has never come up." Tommy said with a another shrug, and then proceeded to down the rest of his juicebox. George thought about it. It's true, he realised he doesn't know much about Tommy and Tubbo's families. He knows the others, but that's because they've been friends for longer.

Nick and George have been friends since elementary. And they became friends with Darryl, Zak and Alex in high school. Freshman year, to be precise. In middle school it was just the two of them, occasionally travelling through friend groups, but not finding a good one to stick to. Luckily Nick and George always had each other.

They became friends with Tommy and Tubbo halfway through junior year. They were both freshman, who stole their table. Since nobody would budge, the seven of them all just sat at the table, becoming close friends despite the two year age gap. Now Tommy and Tubbo were sophomores, and the others were all seniors.

"Phil is really nice. He makes the best mashed potato when I go over." Tubbo said.

"We have our own potato farm." Tommy grinned.

"So when did he adopt you?" Nick asked.

"When I was 8. Before that, the three of us were in fostercare." Tommy said.

"Three?" Darryl asked. Tommy looked down.

"I have another older brother, but I haven't seen him in ages. When he left school, he actually left. He doesn't visit very often." Tommy said.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Tommy." Darryl said, immediately feeling bad.

"It's ok, I got Wilbur and Phil. That's all I need." Tommy said. He looked like he was trying to put on a brave face, but George could tell he didn't want to talk about this anymore.

"What about you, Tubbo?" George asked.

"I have two sisters. Lani and Teagan." Tubbo said. George nodded. The group all proceeded to share siblings, laughing at the fact they didn't share this before.

George has one younger sister, Lexi. She's a sophomore, like Tommy and Tubbo. Both of whom were shocked when they found out.

"Lexi is in our english class." Tubbo said.

"Wait. That Lexi? That's your sister?" Tommy said. George nodded. Tommy looked at Tubbo.

"What?" George asked, noticing the look they gave each other.

"I'm just shocked, that's all." Tommy said, leaning back in his chair.

"Why?" George asked.

"Well she's way cooler than you, for starters." Tommy joked, and George rolled his eyes.

It's true him and his sister were very different. George was undoubtedly the nerd of the family, while his sister was quite the social butterfly.

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When George got home, after him and his sister were picked up by their mom, he immediately went to his room. He had some homework to catch up on. But he was so exhausted, he lay down in his bed, staring at the ceiling. Finally a day where he could just be himself.

It was quite often that the city needed the help of its two superheroes. The police weren't equipped to fight individuals with superpowers, but George was. But it's not always villains with powers that he has to fight. It seems with any issue now, Dream and GNotFound are called to help.

Just the other day, there was a normal guy, no powers, no jewel, who was merely equipped with a pocket knife, robbing a store. The police called for the superheroes. Of course, George is always willing to help, he doesn't want people to get hurt. And a robbing is a serious thing. But it seems that every issue is now up to him to solve.

Everyone relies on him. They seem to forget that normal people can help too, and that you don't always need superpowers.

It's exhausting. Sometimes George sees the news stories or the red alerts sent to everyone, and he reacts right away if necessary, like yesterday. But sometimes he prays the police can handle it... until the police or mayor call for him and Dream's help specifically. Which is almost every time.

As much as George loved helping people, and felt responsible... but just like he told Nick... it's exhausting. Sometimes he just wanted to be a regular teenager. Sometimes he wanted to be selfish.

George touched the pendent hidden under his shirt.

But he was chosen for this responsibility. He wasn't about to let everyone down.

## Chapter End Notes

Bloop



# **This isn't a zombie movie**

## Chapter Summary

George is stuck in the school when an alert goes out that someone has created an army of zombie-like civilians

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The door chimed as he cautiously entered the store, the sound echoing until the door closed behind him. The place was empty, despite the sign on the front saying it was open.

George walked further into the store, looking around as he did. He looked into the glass displays at all the jewellery. A variety of intricately designed necklaces, rings, bracelets and earrings. Each created with such precision, and some even having sparkling gems embedded within.

"George! So good to see you again." A voice interrupted George's thoughts.

"Hi Mr Phil." George said with a friendly smile.

"What's brought you back here?" The man asked.

George pulled the bracelet out of his pocket. The one with the jewel that gave the woman powers. He handed it to the owner of the store, who held it up close to his eye.

"Do you know what gem it is?" George asked. Phil nodded.

"It's quartz, I'm sure." He said, twisting the bracelet in his hands, then looked back up at George curiously. "Where do you keep getting these pieces of jewellery from?" He asked.

Every supervillain George has fought, he has tried to keep their gem. He's missed a few, and lost some others. But they intrigued George. He didn't understand how they could hold so much power.

Since he's no expert, and there are many gems in the world, plus he's colourblind, George has been visiting Phil, a jeweller so he can identify them.

"I inherited some jewellery from a deceased family member, and I'm curious about their wealth, so i can maybe sell them." George said, trying not to sound rehearsed.

"Oh, well why don't you bring them all in at once?" Phil asked, placing the bracelet delicately on the table.

"It's a lot to sort through, and I didn't want to overwhelm you with it, you have other things to do. Plus, I like visiting your store from time to time." George said. Phil looked at him curiously again.

"Do you mind if I can buy a box for this one too?" George asked. Phil nodded.

"I'll go find one for it, I'll be right back." Phil said, carefully picking up the bracelet and walking out the back. George returned to looking at the jewellery.

He doesn't wear many accessories, the only thing being his pendant which he never takes off. The rings caught his eye. Dream has a ring. It's a shame they didn't get to pick the accessory the jewel is embedded in. George would have much preferred a simple ring. It's more stylish.

"Will this do?" Phil asked, returning with a small box in his hand. George took it and opened it, the sparkle of the quartz meeting his eye as soon as he opened it. He closed it again, noticing how it was the same box George has for the other jewels, a delicate carving on the lid and a small metal clasp to lock it.

"It's perfect, thanks again Mr Phil." George said, taking out his money and passing it over to Phil.

"It's on me." Phil said, pushing the cash back towards George.

"No, please take it. It's the least I can do for you always helping me." George insisted. Phil sighed, but took the money.

"I'm guessing I'll see you again? With a new piece of jewellery." Phil said with a smile. George chuckled slightly nervously.

"Most likely. Thanks for your help Mr Phil." He said.

"No problem, now I'm sure you have school, so best be off." He ushered George out of the store. George gave him a friendly wave before walking away.

George pocketed the bracelet, finishing the walk to school which was luckily not too far from the jewellery shop.

"George?" He heard a voice, and turned around to see *him*.

"What are you doing here?" Clay asked, jogging to catch up. George's mouth moved like a fish as he tried to form a sentence, watching as Clay took out his ear buds.

"I've never seen you come this way to school, where do you live?" Clay asked curiously, beginning to walk towards the school, George walking beside him, struggling to breath.

"Oh- I- well I live that way but I got dropped here to... to visit a friend." George said, managing to say a full sentence after taking a deep breath.

"Oh, cool. I also get dropped off at school but it's always too early, so I just walk around the block for a bit, listening to music." Clay said nonchalantly. George nodded, then stared at his feet.

"Thank God we don't have biology today, I don't think we are prepared for the experiment. I think it'll start tomorrow." Clay said. George nodded.

"Yeah, I hate biology." George said with a laugh. Clay looked at him.

"Really? But you're good at it, aren't you?" Clay asked. George had to stop himself from staring at Clay. "Cause aren't you like, topping the class?" *He thinks I'm good at biology. He noticed me.*

"I- well- I mean I guess I'm ok at it. I study when I can. It doesn't mean I like it though. Plus, I'm not even top anymore. That was junior year." George said, flushing a deep red on his cheeks. He was definitely not the top anymore, he barely has time to study.

"What do you like then?" Clay asked.

"I mean, I like computers. Like coding and stuff. I think it's kind of fun." George said, still looking

at his feet. He took a few deep breaths. *I'm saying complete sentences. Oh my God.*

"I like coding too! It's definitely more of a hobby though, my father would never want me to do it as more than that." Clay said.

"Really?" George asked, slowly looking up at him, and Clay nodded.

"Yeah. He's all about reputation and success. He wants me to do something in health or medicine, or follow in his path with politics. I hard-vetoed politics, I don't have the grades for medicine. He's settled for finance. So I guess I'll count money for the rest of my life I guess." Clay rambled on. George just stared at him in admiration as he spoke, noticing the emotions on his face, the way his eyebrow twinged slightly when he mentioned his father, or the way the corners of his lip curved down slightly when he said he'll count money forever, despite it being a joke.

*This is why I should keep looking at my feet.*

Clay looked at George. "Sorry, you didn't need to know that. I ramble a lot." Clay said, scratching the back of his neck nervously.

"Don't apologise. I like listening to you." George said with a soft smile. "And for the record, I think you should do what you enjoy, not what your father wants." But then he immediately looked away, his ears burning as he realised his words. *I like listening to you? He's going to think I'm creepy.*

"Really? Thanks, that means a lot. Most people kind of just tune me out. And I could never go against my father. My choices reflect on him." Clay said.

George knows Clay's father. Well, everyone does. His father is the *Mayor* of the city. He's a very proper businessman with a very intimidating aura around him. He's on the TV a lot, mostly from his office in his mansion.

"But you're still your own person. Maybe he will understand." George said. Clay laughed at that.

"You haven't met my father." He said.

Actually, George has. Well, GNotFound has. He's shaken hands with Mayor Block before. In fact, he meets with him almost every fortnight. And he does not enjoy his presence at all.

The pair arrived at school, George realising he was a tiny bit more at ease while around Clay. Sharing one normal conversation made George feel more comfortable around him. But also like him even more.

*This guy will be the death of me.*

"Anyways, thanks for walking with me, George." Clay said, giving him a wave before joining two of his friends, Wilbur and Niki. George sighed to himself, a smile on his face as Clay walked away.

A hand on his shoulder made him jump. "Details. Now." Nick said, as George brushed him off.

"What do you mean?" He asked, walking with Nick to their lockers.

"You were walking and talking with Clay. And I wasn't even there to be your translator. How are you still conscious?" Nick asked. George was still smiling giddily.

"Well, we bumped into each other on the way here, talking about our interests and his father." George said.

"You actually managed to say sentences?" Nick asked. George nodded.

"Well, he did do most of the talking but I still contributed!" George said. Nick held up his hand, and George high-fived it.

"I'm impressed Gogy." Nick said.

Suddenly, their phones buzzed, along with people in the surrounding vicinity.

## **CODE RED**

**New supervillain patrolling the streets with ability to control citizens at a touch. It appears the touch is contagious, as zombie-like citizens are infecting others. Everyone should stay indoors and not come into contact with the infected, whose eyes are have been changed to a sparkling aqua. Call for Dream and GNotFound**

"What the fuck? Someone's creating an army of zombies?" Nick asked in shock. George looked up from his phone, wide-eyed.

"I don't even know what colour aqua is." George said in horror.

The lockdown alarm starting blaring inside the school, the windows and doors being closed and locked by staff, and students ushered into classrooms.

"Look! Out there!" A girl yelled, and everyone in the corridor turned to the window. Only a few feet away from the window were a couple of people, approaching the window with a blank look in the eyes. George looked closer at their eyes. They were very lightly coloured and sparkling in the sun like glitter.

"In the classroom now!" A teacher yelled, grabbing Nick and George's shoulders and steering them into a room.

George began to panic. He had to help, everyone was relying on him and Dream.

But he was stuck in the classroom, with a few dozen students and a couple of teachers.

"Everyone stay calm, Dream and GNotFound will set everything normal." The teacher said. George felt sick at the words.

There was a girl sitting in the back corner, clutching her head and groaning. George went over slowly, to see if she was ok. The teacher noticed her at the same time George did, and she went over too.

"Jessica?" The teacher said, bending down to her height. George was stood behind them

"Is she ok?" He asked.

The girl suddenly looked up, and opened her eyes. George may not be able to see the light blue colour, appearing as almost white to him, but he could sure as hell see the sparkle.

Jessica grabbed the teacher's arm, and George yelled and ran backwards. The room erupted into chaos and everyone else ran to the opposite side of the room.

"Someone is infected in here, everyone out!" The other teacher yelled.

Nick grabbed George's arm, and pulled him out of the room along with everyone else. It was chaos, there were random people banging on the windows with sparkling eyes trying to get in.

George had to separate. He had to separate somehow.

He fell to the floor, Nick being forced to let go of him. George gripped his head, groaning like the girl did.

"George?" Nick asked.

"I got touched, run!" George said, not opening his eyes.

"Shit." Nick yelled. George could hear the chaos around him, everyone scrambling to get away from him.

A minute later, he opened one eye and saw the corridor was cleared of people. He quickly got up and dashed into a classroom, closing the door behind him after checking no one was inside.

He pulled his pendant in front of his shirt, and closed his eyes. "Mask on!" He said, and felt the familiar tingling sweep over his body.

He opened his eyes and pulled the rubber band off his wrist, snapping it into a bow. He then ran out of the room, and down the corridor.

When he turned the corner, he came across a group of scared students.

"It's GNotFound!" Someone said.

"I came to secure the school. Stay inside, don't let anyone touch you." He said, running around them and to a window that no one was trying to open. He slid it open, and then jumped out of it, landing softly on the ground.

He had to find the source of all this. He had to find the villain.

He heard movement behind him and turned to see a few people with glistening eyes. He immediately ran away, but turned a corner to find more people. There were so many and now they were after him.

George jumped onto the roof of a car, preparing his bow and arrow. The zombie people still came towards him, not fazed by the weapon in his hand. George hates hurting innocent people. He would only do it if necessary.

Now he was surrounded, about fifteen people trying to grab his feet and trying to get on the car. He couldn't shoot them, they were innocent. He just aimed the bow at them, but they didn't care.

"Shit. Where do I go?" George said to himself, looking around.

He decided to jump over the top of their heads and start sprinting away. He was definitely faster than them, that's for sure. But they are hard to fight since one touch, and you get infected.

George pulled out his phone, trying to see if there were more alerts, to figure out where the villain is.

"Behind you!" George heard a voice, and then before he realised what had happened, he had been

knocked to the floor. He looked up to see Dream standing up, pointing his sword at the chest of a man.

"He was an inch away from you, G!" Dream yelled. In one swift motion, he flipped his sword around so he was carefully holding the blade, and he knocked the man on the head with the handle part, hard, knocking him to the ground.

Dream turned to George, a hand outstretched. George begrudgingly took the hand, and let Dream help him up.

"I wish I could just stab them all, like a video game." Dream said.

"This is real life and they are real people under an influence of a villain. This isn't a zombie movie." George scolded him. Dream gestures to the unconscious man.

"Obviously! That's why I didn't stab him. I do have a moral compass, you know." Dream said. George rolled his eyes, and started running again, pocketing his phone. Dream was beside him as they ran through the streets.

"So who started this?" George thought out loud as they ran.

"I checked the news story, the person was last seen at town square. The alert also said how *desperately* they needed me." Dream said in a cocky voice. "And you I guess." He added. George rolled his eyes.

"I mean, apparently we are the only two people in the whole city who can help with anything." George said, a twinge of annoyance in his voice. Dream looked at him as they ran.

"Well, yeah. We have superpowers to fight the supervillain. Civilians can't actually do much." He said.

"Yeah, I know. But for other stuff? Do they really need us? They summoned us for a *robbery*. It was a regular robbery of a regular restaurant. We aren't fucking detectives. Can't the police do anything themselves?" George ranted, then sighed. "Sorry, I'm just exhausted. I do love helping people, ignore my rant." He said. Dream smiled to himself.

"I don't mind. I like listening to you." He said, recalling kind-hearted words from hopefully a new friend.

George took it as one of Dream's flirty comments. "Shut up." He said, making Dream laugh.

"Never." He said.

They finally reached the street leading to the town square, but there was a crowd of people, aimlessly walking around. Dream and George looked at each other and nodded, both jumping on the nearest fire escape of an apartment and making their way to the roof. They ran along the top, and eventually reached the end, looking over the town square.

"Holy crap there's so many people." George said, and Dream nodded. "How can we tell who the villain is?" He asked. Dream looked at him funny.

"Obviously that one, head to toe in aqua clothing." He said, pointing at someone sitting at the edge of the fountain. It was a woman, holding a staff, and with glasses covering her eyes. George didn't realise, since she looked like she was dressed in all white, blending in with the concrete around.

"Oh. Where's the gem?" He asked, looking closer.

"I think I can see a necklace or something, with a blue gem." Dream said. George nodded.

"What type?" He asked.

"We've been through this, how the hell would I know? It's light blue." Dream said.

"Ok. This is going to be hard. She has a whole army." George said. He watched as the woman lifted her staff and pointed it at the roof, right where Dream and George were.

George pushed Dream out of the way, falling on top of him in the process, as a beam of light just missed them.

George was lying on top of Dream, a very intimate position with his hands on his chest. George rolled off and pulled Dream away from the edge of the building.

If George had looked closer, he would have noticed the slight blush on the bottom part of Dream's face that was visible.

"Ok so her zombies can just touch you but I think her staff can shoot it too. That leads me to believe that she isn't actually contagious herself, just her zombies and staff. If we get it away from her, we can overpower her and take the gem." George said.

Dream cleared his throat and nodded. "So it's like the last one we fought? With dodging the beams?" He said.

"Kind of. Except, it comes from her stick, and you also have to dodge the army of zombies." George said.

"Sounds easy enough. Let's go." Dream said, and then got up, and jumped off the building. George growled in anger, Dream always rushes. They had no plan yet.

But of course, GNotFound jumped after Dream. They are a team, of course.

"Finally you decided to join! He will be so pleased when I take your jewels! It will be like taking candy from a baby once you become my slaves!" The girl yelled, and shot her staff at Dream, who effortlessly somersaulted over the beam. "Ok, show off." She said to him, he just smirked in response.

"Give us yours and we won't have to do this." George said, his bow in hand, arrow at the ready.

"Do you see the power I have? I'm never giving this up!" She yelled, casting another beam at George, who dodged and shot an arrow, narrowly missing the woman.

George looked around and saw a crowd of zombies surrounding them, all coming closer. This was like something out of his nightmares.

Dream was nervous too, as he looked around. How can they focus on so much at once?

"I'll distract them, you take the staff." George yelled, and Dream nodded, gripping his sword tighter and running at the woman.

George turned and ran towards a group of the zombies. He jumped over their heads, and they turned to face him. His goal was to get them all on him, and away from Dream.

He shot an arrow in the direction of another group of civilians, who all turned to George as well.

George started running around the square, desperately trying to avoid them but simultaneously get them away from Dream. He could hear noises coming from the fountain, and he could only steal glances at the fight.

Dream was dodging, using the fountain to his aid, running around it. The villain shot one at him, and then shot one at George, but Dream used his sword to block the beam aimed at George. He must have been doing that the whole time George was running around.

"Project!" Dream yelled, and a second Dream appeared next to him. Both ran around the two sides of the fountain at her, dodging the beams as she tried to avoid them.

George looked behind him, and realised he was completely surrounded by people. At least there was less zombies on Dream.

George could have shot one of them, and then run through, but he had to remind themselves these were real, innocent people.

Instead, he did a quick run up, and somersaulted over the heads of some of them, sprinting away once he landed.

George glanced back at the fountain, and saw a large group approaching one of the Dreams, who hadn't noticed.

At that same moment, the other Dream jumped at her, but she hit him with her staff, making him disappear into thin air. The fake Dream. Which means the one with zombies almost on him and dodging the beams was the real one.

"Dream!" George shouted, running towards the fountain. Dream realised the zombies were right on him, and he spun around, sword in hand. George jumped into the air, over the heads of civilians and landed in front of Dream, just as a beam was shot, aimed originally for the back of Dream's head.

"Shield!" George yelled, grabbing Dream's arm with one hand, and using his other hand to focus the shield. The blue sphere surrounded Dream and George. They could hear the sounds of people punching the shield, but not getting through. And now the repeated beams being absorbed by it.

"Thanks." Dream said, and George let go of his arm.

"What now?" George asked, focused on holding the shield.

"Run towards her. Just before we get to her, drop your shield, I'll use my sword to knock her staff away."

"What about the zombies?" George asked.

"Can you hold them off?" Dream asked. George nodded. He could do that.

"Ok, on the count of three." George said, beginning to walk forward. Dream walked beside him.

"One." George and Dream started running in sync.

"Two." Dream said, adjusting his grip on the sword.

"Three!" George said, when they were right in front of her. George let go of the shield. He had to



let Dream out, but now he had no defence against the zombies.

George leaped over the top of their heads, in an attempt to get away and take them with him again, but one grabbed his ankle in the air, pulling him to the ground with force.

A fiery feeling erupted in George's head, making him clutch it in pain.

After a moment, he opened his eyes. It's a pity the colourblind hero wouldn't even be able to see how pretty his glistening aqua eyes were.

Dream had successfully casted the staff away, grabbing it before she could jump towards it herself. Dream held it with two hands, and snapped it against his knee.

He quickly took a glance at the crowd of zombies just a few yards away, noticing G had disappeared. *Is he ok?*

But he didn't have time to find him. Dream jumped onto the woman, knocking her to the floor.

"He will make you pay." She said. Dream grabbed her necklace. How does he pull it off? It won't fit over her head it and wasn't ripping off like he thought it would.

"He?" Dream asked through gritted teeth, trying to find the clasp to undo it. He looked to his right and saw the group zombies, he would be infected any second.

"Blade. Blade has been preparing for this for years. You are doomed." She laughed. Dream gave up, he quickly grabbed his sword, brought it to her neck, and cut the necklace, ripping it off her.

As soon as he did, her glasses and bright blue clothes disappeared, being replaced by a regular top and skirt.

Dream looked to his right, and made eye contact with G. He was right there beside him, his hand outstretched towards Dream's shoulder.

But Dream smiled as he saw the exact moment the glitter left everybody's eyes, including G's. Although it's almost impossible to see his eyes through the dark goggles, Dream almost could. He could see the sparkles glistening clear through the tinted lens, but now that they disappeared, he couldn't even figure out where his eyes were.

Clay so wished he could see his eyes.

George shook his head, as the infection left him. He looked around. "What happened?" He asked, not realising his hand was still outstretched towards Dream.

Dream smirked and took his hand, pressing a kiss to the back of his knuckles. George pulled away instantly, scoffing.

"You did it?" George said, surprised as he looked down at the woman. Dream held up the necklace.

"Don't sound so shocked." Dream said, passing the necklace to George.

George saw Dream's ring flash twice, just as he looked down at it. Dream has five minutes left.

George turned to the crowd of confused people.

"Everything is ok. You were under the control of a villain, but everything's back to normal, you can

go about your day." George shouted to the crowd.

Some of them clapped and some quickly dashed off to their respected jobs.

"Wh-what happened?" The woman on the floor asked. Dream grabbed her wrists and stood her up.

"What do you mean what happened? You created an army of creepy zombies and almost took over the city." Dream said, squeezing her wrists tighter. George stepped forward.

"I forgot to tell you, you had to leave last time, the last villain didn't remember anything either when she changed back. This has been happening with the past dozen villains. They all claim they've forgotten, but I think there's more to it now, this is a pattern." George said. Dream furrowed his eyebrows in thought, but George couldn't tell because of the mask.

"How can they just forget what happened? It's not like anyone used a power to erase their memory right now." Dream said.

"I don't know. But ask her, I bet she has no memory of Blade or anything. What do you remember?" George asked her.

"I was on my way to college. Then I heard a voice and that's it." She said.

"That was the same with the last few people. A voice. Something new is going on Dream, and it has to do with Blade." George said.

Sirens filled the square, and a number of emergency vehicles showed up.

George felt a buzzing against his chest and looked down to see the flashing of his pendant. Five minutes for him too.

Police and paramedics ran over. The police handcuffed the woman.

"Same thing as last time. Do a lie detector test. She's lost her memory. What happened to the last one?" George asked.

"It seemed she was telling the truth. She's still at the hospital being treated for the arrow wound. What is your suggestion for what we do with them?" The sergeant asked George.

George thought about it. They did cause mass chaos, but it was hard to know if they were in control.

"Since their memories were erased, I find it difficult to believe they were in control in the first place. I say keep a close eye on them, but don't press charges. Not until myself and Dream find out what is going on." George said. The sergeant nodded, taking the woman away.

George turned to Dream.

"So, as I was saying, I think this has something to do with Blade." George asked.

"Who the fuck is Blade?" Dream asked. George was shocked. Everyone knew who Blade was.

"You don't know who he is? The whole city has heard of Blade." George said. Dream stayed silent.

"Three years ago, he caused chaos in the city. No one knows how he did it, but people were turning against each other, going crazy. So many people were causing destruction. It was rumoured he was looking for something, or for someone. No one knows what. It was like the purge. But then it

suddenly just... stopped. One second the whole city was at war. There was explosions and buildings falling and people fighting and stealing, and the next, it just stopped. Everyone stopped fighting. Everyone stopped going crazy. Blade disappeared. The repairs took ages, a whole year. People died that day, in tragic accidents of course. The weird part was everyone who contributed to the chaos, forgot everything. They didn't know what they were doing. But the thing is, they were just regular people, they didn't have powers." George said. Dream was trying to take in everything he was saying.

"There was a rumour, that a superhero saved the day. This was before us though, and the person was never seen again. The city calls them The Liberator. The rumour was that they wore white, blue and green, and they had multiple powers. But these same rumours also claimed the person died, or was very close to death. The Liberator did something, against Blade, but as a result, got themselves hurt. For years, everyone thought no one walked away from that fight. Everyone thought The Liberator and Blade both died, since nothing was heard from either of them. But that's two people now, Dream. Two people have mentioned Blade." George explained.

Dream was shocked, listening to the story.

"So if Blade is alive, why has he waited until now to do something? And what is even he doing? And we have fought supervillains before, with gems, but none of them mentioned Blade and none of them had their memories erased. What's changed?" Dream had so many questions.

"I- I have no idea." George said, sitting down on the edge of the fountain. Dream sat down next to him.

"I don't know what to do." George said softly. Dream put a hand on his shoulder, making George look at him.

"We will figure it out. We're a team. We are Dream and GNotFound! No one can beat us." Dream said, and smiled when he noticed the small smile form on his partner's face.

Dream's ring started flashing rapidly, catching the eye of them both. He groaned.

"I hate the time limit, it messes everything up!" Dream said, standing up. George stood up too, his would start flashing soon too. Plus he had to get back to school.

"You did good today, Dream." George said. Dream looked back at him, glad the mask covered his cheeks.

"Aw thanks super goggles." He said, poking George's goggles. George stepped back.

"Don't call me super goggles ever again." He said. Dream just laughed, and waved before jogging away.

George looked around and saw some reporters standing nearby, trying to get his attention. George gave them a wave, but also ran off.

He had an english lesson to attend.

## Chapter End Notes

Just for those who know, I'm updating this book daily until I catch up to chapters released on wattpad. After that, it'll be weekly at the same time hopefully :D

# Partners, not friends

## Chapter Summary

George and Clay discuss superheroes with Nick. And Dream and GNotFound have a little visit to the Mayor of the city

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"George? Get up." Nick said, prodding the other boy on the shoulder. George lifted his head from his folded arms on the table..

"What?" He mumbled, rubbing his eyes.

"You look awful." Nick said. George sent him a death glare, running a hand through his hair.

"Thanks, Nick." George said.

"Seriously, you look exhausted. Did you sleep last night?" Nick asked.

George recalled the events of last night. Him and Dream were called to help find a missing child. It wasn't like it was a physically demanding task, it just took several hours. Luckily, the young boy was found by Dream in a park. It was a weird sight for George, seeing his childish partner communicate with an actual child. Ryan was his name.

*"Your mommy and daddy were very worried about you." Dream had said, holding up the four year old. Ryan giggled.*

*"I was chasing the kittens!" He said.*

*"Oh, well that's a perfectly reasonable explanation." Dream said.*

*"Dream!" George had scolded his partner.*

*"What? If I saw a kitten, I would chase it too." Dream said. George rolled his eyes and took the child, walking away from the park to the police and parents.*

*"You shouldn't run away from your mommy and daddy. They were very worried about you, and you could have gotten hurt." George said to the little boy. The kid just laughed, and put his hands on George's goggles, trying to move them.*

*"They're stuck on tight, you can't get them off." George said. Which was true, the magic binded them to his face, the only way for it to be removed was with his pendant.*

*The pendent which Ryan had grabbed. George pulled his hand away.*

*"So annoying." He muttered.*

*"No, it's adorable." Dream said.*

*"Kids are a nuisance. Screaming, crying, whinging." George said, holding the child further away at arms length so he would stop trying to grab his jewel. Dream chuckled and grabbed Ryan from George again, tipping him upside down and swinging him in the air, making the boy scream with laughter.*

*"They are fun." Dream smiled.*

*"That's because you're a child yourself." George had rebutted.*

"Couldn't sleep." George said to Nick, letting his head fall back against the table.

"Well, you need to wake up, because we have to do the experiment in a few minutes, when Clay arrives." Nick said. George groaned in response.

"Hi George, hi Nick." Clay's voice was heard, and George immediately lifted his head and sat up straight, as Clay took a seat beside him.

"Great, we can do the experiment now! Well, when Mr Peterson tells us we can. I'll grab the lab coats and glasses." Nick said, leaving George with Clay for a minute.

George glanced at Clay, who gave him a smile. George sent a quick tight-lip smile back before turning red and staring at his own feet instead.

"So. Excited for the experiment?" Clay asked, tapping his pen against the table.

"Oh, um yeah, I mean, I guess um, yeah." George stammered out. *I thought I was better around him now.*

"I think we will get bored of it pretty quick. All we do is measure up the solutions and then count the organisms with the microscope. But we have to do a bunch of trials every day. But I'm excited, it's something new." Clay said. George nodded. *Please come back Nick.*

"Alright, coat for you, coat for you. And glasses for you and glasses for you." Nick said, handing out the materials to his lab partners. They all put on their coats and safety glasses. Nick looked at his reflection against the window. He laughed.

"If I could just colour in the lenses with sharpie, I could look like GNotFound." Nick said, doing a superhero stance with his hands on his hips. Clay laughed at that comment, and so did George.

"You a big fan of GNotFound?" Clay asked Nick. George didn't want to contribute to this conversation more than he needed. He already felt guilty enough not telling Nick.

"Obviously, he's GNotFound." Nick said. George chewed on his nails. He's debated telling Nick for ages, but doesn't want to spoil his role-model. Plus, that could put him at danger.

"What about Dream?" Clay asked.

"Dream is so cool too, obviously. Both of them are pogchamp." Nick said. Clay grinned. "Are you a fan of them?" Nick asked.

"Oh yeah, Dream is so cool." Clay said, cracking his knuckles before plugging the microscope into the power outlet.

"Ok, class. You may all begin. Today is Thursday, so we have biology tomorrow and you can measure organism growth again. But you will all need to come in on Saturday and Sunday to

measure as well. In order for the results to be an actual indicator of your research question." Mr Peterson addressed the class. Many people groaned when they found out their weekend would be interrupted.

"What about you George?" Clay turned to him. George was caught off guard.

"Huh?" He said, reaching for the vial of glucose.

"You a fan of Dream? Or GNotFound?" Clay asked. George grabbed a pipette and filled it to the right amount of glucose solution, reading the instructions.

"Oh, um. I mean, I guess. I don't really follow the news." He shrugged, dispensing the liquid into the beaker. Nick also put an amount of yeast into the beaker, and Clay put the blue indicator in, mixing it as he looked at George.

"If you had to choose one of the hero's, who?" Clay persisted.

"Choose them for what? Which is better?" George asked.

"No, just which one you like more." Clay said.

"Well I'm not really that much a fan of either." George shrugged, as he prepared the slide with glass cover.

"But you have to pick." Nick said.

"Ok, then Dream." George said. Clay smirked subtly to himself, but quickly relaxed his face.

"Why?" Clay asked.

"I don't know. GNotFound is kinda lame." George said, sucking the new solution into a new pipette and focusing hard on ejecting it onto the slide with the grid. Clay and Nick both looked at George.

"Why? GNotFound is so cool. He has a blue shield thing and like a bow with magically appearing arrows." Nick said. George sighed, successfully covering the liquid and placing the slide under the microscope.

"I told you, I don't really care about superhero's that much." George said, adjusting the light on the microscope and placing his eye to the eyepiece, adjusting the nobs to focus the image.

"But you think GNotFound is lame? Why? He's amazing." Clay said. George almost choked, and stopped focusing the microscope. *Clay called me amazing. Well, alter-ego me, who has superpowers and saves people's lives, but still, that's me. Well, I guess it isn't really.*

"Yeah- I-I mean I just don't know much about either. GNotFound just has a lame shield. Dream's power is cooler, so I picked Dream." George said, swallowing and turning his attention back to the microscope.

"Mind if I have a go?" Clay asked. George stepped back, and Clay took his place. He closed one eye and squinted with the other through the eyepiece, his long eyelashes brushing against the glass.

George walked closer to Nick, who was on the opposite side of the table. Nick made kissing-faces to George, who slapped him on the arm, just as Clay looked back up.

"I think it's focused, but I can barely see any yeast." He said. Nick went over and looked through.

He hummed as he looked through. Then he stood back up, a finger to his chin in thought.

"You know what..." Nick said.

"What? Did we do something wrong?" George asked.

"Oh, no, I just have no clue what yeast looks like under a microscope and I have absolutely no clue what we are even doing or what the experiment is about. Also, I am really craving pasta right now." Nick said. Clay laughed at Nick, but George just scoffed, pushing his friend out of the way and looking through the microscope.

"It kind of looks like tiny bubbles. Dead organisms are fully black. I can see... two viable yeast on the grid." George said, standing back up and pulling out his notebook to write it down.

"Only two?" Clay asked. George nodded, ruling up a table.

"It will multiply over the next few days." George said.

"Great, so are we done? Can I go to lunch?" Nick asked. George rolled his eyes.

"No. This was trial one, for one measurement of glucose. We are doing three trials per amount of glucose. Remember we are testing to see if the increase in glucose affects the population of yeast. We have five different amounts of glucose in our glucose-yeast solutions to test, and each one has three trials. So no, you can't go to lunch. We have barely started." George said. Nick just stared at him with a blank expression on his face.

"The only word I understood in that was lunch. And it was you saying I can't go. So now I am sad." Nick said, sitting back down on his seat. George groaned and passed him the vials.

"You can measure out the amounts of each mixture into the beakers. Clay will put the solutions onto slides, labelling which ones are what amount of glucose. I'll count the yeast since I know what it looks like." George said. The other two both looked at George for a moment.

"S-sorry, am I being bossy?" George asked, his ears going slightly red.

"No. You're just too smart for us. If we didn't have you, me and Nick would probably have no clue what we are doing." Clay said, turning to Nick as he spoke, who was about to dip his fingers into the beaker with the first solution on it. Clay pulled the beaker away from him.

"It looks so yummy though." Nick complained, staring at the blue liquid. Clay chuckled, turning back to George.

"You're not bossy, George. Ok, let's do this." Clay said, pulling the slides towards him and a pipette. Clay sent George a reassuring smile, which made George go even more red, choosing to turn his attention to the microscope which had nothing under it anymore.

George had to correct Nick multiple times during the lesson, but he was actually trying his hardest. And together, they managed to get through all their trials successfully as the bell went for lunch. Nick cheered at the sound.

"If your group has completed, you may go to lunch break. But if you haven't, you have to stay here until you finish off your trials." Mr Peterson said.

As soon as George got his coat and glasses off, he was immediately pulled out of the classroom by Nick.



"Nick! I didn't grab my-" Nick passed George his bag. "Oh." George said.

"I'm fucking starving, George." Nick said.

They made their way to the cafeteria, and to their table, and Nick pulled out his packed lunch, which was in fact pasta. The only other person here was Darryl, who greeted them cheerfully, but only got a response from George. Nick was very invested in his pasta.

They all sat there for a minute, until a voice interrupted the conversation between Darryl and George.

"Hi, um, my friends' experiment ran into lunch. Mind if I sit with you guys until they get here?"

"Of course, you muffin. You can sit wherever you want." Darryl said.

"Thanks, Darryl." Clay said with a relieved smile, sitting down next to George, and across from Darryl. Nick was sitting George's other side.

George held his breath as Clay sat down. *Why can't I just act normal around him all the time?* The only times he can get out a normal functioning sentence is when he's in school-mode, or focused on a different task.

"Is this the yeast experiment I heard the bio students are doing?" Darryl asked. Clay nodded.

"Yeah, us three are a group. We actually finished on time." Clay said, pointing to himself, George, and Nick, who was still devouring his lunch.

"What's up bitches." Tommy interrupted, sitting down beside Darryl, who muttered "Language". Tommy noticed Clay and squinted at him.

"You're friends with Wilbur right?" Tommy asked.

"Yeah, I am." Clay said. Tommy nodded.

"Knew it. You came over one time and played ping pong with him and his other friends." Tommy said. Clay looked confused, but then realised.

"Oh you're Tommy, right? Wilbur's little brother." Clay said. Tommy scoffed so loudly.

"Little? LITTLE. I may be younger but I, am a BIG MAN. How dare you say such disgusting slurs at this table you son of a bitch, you green-eyed long-noodle-ass motherfucke-"

"TOMMY! No! Language! Stop!" Darryl yelled at Tommy. Clay looked shocked at the outburst, but everyone started laughing. Skeppy and Quackity had just joined the table at that time and didn't bother asking why Tommy was throwing a tantrum. He throws them a lot.

"Ignore him, Clay. The child has a big mouth." Nick said, after finishing off his pasta. "Ugh, that was such a good lunch."

"Child? CHILD! Listen here Nick, you son of a bitch I am no child, I am the biggest man to ever rule the world, I am better than you, you 'hey mamas' motherfu-"

"TOMMY!" Darryl screamed, putting his hand over Tommy's mouth.

"What's Tommy doing now?" A sigh came from behind George, who turned to see Wilbur, along with Fundy, Karl and Niki.

"He is cussing everyone out." Nick said with a shrug.

"Sounds about right. Hey, Clay, sorry that took a while." Wilbur said. Clay stood up, with his bag.

"Not a problem, thanks for letting me sit here for a bit guys. Sorry for calling you little, Tommy. See you tomorrow George and Nick." Clay waved. Tommy was muttering under his breath, but George waved back, still waving as Clay and his friends walked away.

Nick grabbed George's hand and lowered it, once Clay had sat down at the other table.

"I don't like that guy." Tommy said.

"Clay? What? Why? How can you not like Clay? He's so cool and friendly and funny and-" George stopped himself. Tommy laughed, and Tubbo sat down beside him.

"Who's cool and friendly and funny?" Tubbo asked. Tommy laughed even more.

"Slow down there, Gogy. Sounds like you have a crush." Tommy teased. George's ears went red.

"I do not. Shut up, Tommy." George said, in a serious tone. Tommy's laughter faltered when he heard the tone. He gave George a curious look, but then changed the subject and began chatting with Tubbo.

"If Tommy can pick up on it..." Nick whispered, and George hit him.

"You don't think anyone else knows, right?" George whispered back.

"Relax, I was joking." Nick said.

•

"So what does the G stand for? It must mean something, right. *GNotFound*." Dream said, dragging his sword along the railing.

"Can you cut out that noise?" G said, glaring at Dream, which went unseen of course, due to his goggles that hid his eyes.

"Ok... Gerald." Dream said.

"That's not my name." George said.

"Whatever.... Gary."

"Shut up."

"Ok... George." Dream said. George felt his heart stop.

"Stop with this game. Right now." George said. Dream put his hands up in surrender.

"Sorry, just guessing names I know. But is it to do with your name? Or maybe last name? But you are *GNotFound* so does that mean that there is actually *no* G in your name, and you're just really smart." Dream said. George turned away from Dream and jumped onto the roof of a house, and then jumped onto the power line pole, jumping onto a taller building with a rooftop.

Away from Dream. George took a deep breath as he continued his walk.

"But why would you pick the letter G of all the letters in the alphabet. I'm sure your name doesn't have every letter *except* G so why pick that letter? So I think it does have something to do with your name-

"Dream! Shut the fuck up! Stop trying to figure out anything. For starters, you won't, secondly, we can't know anything about each other. We are partners, not friends. You don't know me." George said, turning to face the smiley face. The only emotion George can see.

If the mask wasn't there, George would have been able to see the flash of hurt that appeared on Clay's face.

"You're right. Sorry." Clay said, looking at the floor as they continued to walk along the rooftops, occasionally jumping over a gap.

Clay accidentally let out a yawn.

"Tired?" G asked. Clay nodded. After their mission last night to find the kid, he got barely any sleep. It felt like he had been falling asleep all day, and his eye bags were very prominent.

G sighed. "Me too. I don't even want to do this thing. I want to go home and sleep." He said. Clay nodded.

The pair were on their way to the Mayor's office. They had a fortnightly meeting with him. Dream and GNotFound always meet elsewhere first, and walk to the building together.

It was Clay's idea to meet first. Mostly because it wouldn't expose that he already lived there. It's always a very awkward experience for him, having to talk to his *father* who thinks he is someone else. Many times, Clay has almost slipped up. Not only would that expose him to his father, who would probably kill him. It would also expose to GNotFound that he is Clay Block, son of the mayor. And G has emphasised many times that they can't know each other's identities.

Even though Clay really wants to know who the boy he is love with, really is.

They reached the tall fence of the building, well, mansion, and were escorted by security like usual into the house and to the mayor's office. Clay finds it hilarious that he needs to be escorted in his own house. He already knows this place well enough.

"Enter." A voice was heard from the other side of the door, and the duo entered the room. The Mayor was sitting at his desk, typing at his computer.

"Take a seat." He said, and they did. Clay shifted uncomfortably. The one thing he dislikes about this whole ordeal, is that his father has spoken more to Dream than Clay. But he pretends it doesn't hurt.

At least he gets his quality time one way or another.

"So, kids. I've heard a report that a few of the villains have lost their memories. They have forgotten ever causing havoc. Can you explain this further to me?" He said.

Clay didn't say anything, hoping G could take the reins.

"Well, um." G cleared his throat. "When we got rid of their powers and they changed back, it appeared that they simultaneously forgot everything. It's happened a dozen times now and we had two of the individuals take a lie detector test, which they both passed. The last thing both of them remember is hearing someone talk to them." G said. Clay looked at his partner as he spoke.

"Any clue as to what caused this?" Mayor asked.

"Well, when both were villains, they went on about how they were trying to take our jewels, our power, which happens regularly, but this time they said they were going to give them to someone." G said, now nervously fiddling with his hands.

"Who?" The Mayor asked.

"The Blade." G said, and Clay could see the slight frown on his face when he said it. Mayor Block's eyes went wide, and his face drained of colour slightly.

"You know who Blade is? You became Mayor this year, I wasn't sure you would know." G said.

"Of course I know. You don't become Mayor without finding out about Blade. Are you sure?" He asked. Clay and G both nodded.

"Both individuals said his name." G said. The Mayor sat there for a moment, thinking. "We think he's behind the memory erasing too." George said.

"You're saying Blade has the power to erase memories? How can he do it but not be anywhere near them?" He asked.

"We have no idea." G said. Clay could tell it was bugging his partner too.

"Very well. Can you please keep me updated when you get new information?" He asked. They both nodded. "Well that's mostly what I wanted to discuss. Anything you want to bring up?" He asked. Clay shook his head, but G actually nodded.

"Sir, I don't know if you have realised but me and Dream have been called a lot recently. And we are of course happy to help, in emergencies. But we feel we are being called for things police can do. We are superhero's, and we protect the city, but if you recall, we are also citizens who do have lives as well. And also not all solutions need a superhero. Regular people can be powerful if they put their mind to it." G said. Clay held his breath.

He knew his father. He knew exactly where this conversation was heading.

"So what are you saying?" Block asked slowly.

"I'm saying that we are always here for the city when needed, but the police can do things too. We were called for a robbery and a lost child. And obviously we willingly helped, we love helping, but the police underestimate their own abilities." G said. Clay shrunk down into the chair, bracing himself.

"So you're saying these issues of lost children and armed robberies are... beneath you. You think you're better than these 'regular people' problems." Mayor Block said. G shook his head.

"No, no, that's not what I'm saying at all. I'm saying the police are also perfectly capable-"

"You want me to send my police force, with batons and tasers to fight supervillains with enhanced agility, strength, speed and superpowers." He said.

"No, of course not. Me and Dream can handle that, obviously. It's the smaller things..."

"The small things? GNotFound, you said you are also a civilian, yes? You live a normal life, do normal things. Then as a civilian, you would understand the impact of the things like losing a child

or losing money can have on a normal civilian. They may be small to you, *GNotFound*, but that doesn't mean these people don't deserve the absolute best helping them." Mayor Block said.

Clay covered his face. This is why him and his father never get along. He only hears what he wants to hear, and he is always right. Clay never fights.

"That's not what I'm saying, sir." G said, clearly getting frustrated but remaining polite. Clay leaned towards him, putting his mouth close to his ear.

"Just let it go. You'll never get him to understand. Can we leave?" Clay whispered. G turned to him. Clay can never figure out if their eyes meet. G can see his, but he just stares into the dark goggles.

"Are you too scared to speak for yourself, *Dream*? Need your coworker to talk for you?" He laughed. Clay clenched his fists. *Coworker*.

"Sir, we love helping people, it's why we do this. But we have been called in multiple times a week, sometimes multiple times a day, for months now. We are being... what's the word? Overworked?" G said. Clay almost let out a whimper in fear.

"Overworked? You think you are being overworked? You are a superhero, your job is to serve and protect the city from harm. You don't get to choose when you want to work. You don't get sick days. It is your *responsibility*. You sighed up for this. You are the ones with powers. If you aren't able to work a full-time job, like most people, then give your power to someone who can. Have you tried being the mayor? Of this chaotic city? You don't know what overworked is." Mayor Block said, his voice booming and laughter terrifying. The man had stood up now, his fists on the table in front of him.

"G, let it go." Clay whispered again, grabbing his partner's hand and tugging, trying to get him to stand up and leave. G stood his ground, and stood up to face the Mayor.

"It *is* our responsibility. It *is* our full-time job. But we have a life too. People forget we probably also have full-time work or studies or commitments as well! We basically have two full-time jobs! Sir, all I'm asking is the police not call us for every thing. Only for things they can't control, or their resources prevent them from doing something. That's all I ask." G said.

Clay put his hands on his head, clearly distressed.

"You don't get to pick and choose, *GNotFound*. And who gave you the audacity to talk to me like that. How dare you ask for my help when *you're* the one who took on this responsibility. *You're* the one who signed up for this life."

"No, I didn't! I didn't choose this!" G finally yelled, slamming his hands on the desk, and staring straight into the Mayor's eyes. Clay's mouth was wide open. Block was staring back with the same intensity, a small look of amusement on his face.

The silence was defeating, as the pair stared at each other.

"You're right." G said after a few moments. "It is my responsibility. It is my job, I can't complain. I do love this city, and I really love helping. And if I'm one of the only people who have the capabilities to help, then I will use it. Thanks for your time, Mayor Block." G said, and then turned on his heel and walked out of the room.

Clay was about to follow after G. "Dream." Block said, and Clay turned back around nervously.

"Get your partner in order. He's clearly got issues." Mayor Block said, sitting back down in his chair and flattening out a piece of paper.

Clay wanted to do many things at that moment. He wanted to scream, he wanted to punch, he wanted to tear that stupid piece of paper down the middle and tell his father how horrible he was being.

And he could have. He easily could have, because it would have no repercussions for Clay, only Dream.

But he didn't. He bit his tongue, and left the room. Internally beating himself up for not standing up for G. For not standing up for the boy of his dreams. For not standing up for the person who stood up for the both of them.

He looked around the hallway but couldn't see him. "Where's GNotFound?" Clay asked security. They said he left, so Clay ran out of his house, and to the street. He looked around but couldn't see him anywhere.

"Shit." Clay muttered. He jogged slowly through the streets, trying to figure out where he would have gone.

Clay walked for a bit. It was late and it was dark. He would also have to go back soon before anyone realises he is missing.

Just when he was about to give up looking for G, he saw something blue, sitting on the edge of a tall building. G's feet were dangling off the edge as he looked out across the city. Clay smiled to himself as he looked at the boy.

He sneakily made his way to the roof as well. G hadn't realised he was there, standing right behind him.

Clay thought of a billion witty things he could say. He could scare G, he could complain about how long it took to find him, he could make a pun.

But Clay did none of those.

"Hey, you." Dream said softly. G didn't turn to look, just tensed his shoulders a bit.

Clay sat down beside G, letting his feet dangle. Clay was hyper aware of how their ankles occasionally brushed against each other.

"You want to talk about it?" Clay asked cautiously.

"No." G said. Clay nodded, and they sat there for a bit longer.

Clay could feel himself drifting off, only slightly. He was mesmerised by the stars but was so in need of sleep. He let his eyes close, just for a moment.

"You can go if you want." G said, making Clay open his eyes.

"What?"

"You're basically falling asleep. On my shoulder, I might add. You can go home." G said. Clay lifted his head immediately, not realising he had done that.

"Sorry. No, I'm not going anywhere yet." Clay said, feeling his cheeks blush.

"Why?"

"Cause you're lonely."

"I'm not lonely."

"Well, if I wasn't here, you'd be lonely."

"Dream, just go home. I'm fine." G said, looking back out at the sky.

"But we never get a chance to just talk, we always fight and then separate. Can we just talk?" Clay asked.

"What would we even talk about? We can't tell each other anything about ourselves." G said

"Why not? I don't get it." Clay said. G sighed.

"You know we can't. It's better like this." G said.

"I think it's dumb. This whole thing is dumb." Clay huffed.

"Well we don't have a choice." G sighed again. Clay looked at him.

"Do you wish you did?" Clay asked.

"Do I wish what?"

"Do you wish you had a choice? If you could go back in time and prevent you ever receiving the jewel, from ever becoming a superhero. Would you?" Clay asked.

"Why are you asking?" G said softly.

"Because at the office you sounded upset. Upset at the fact you didn't get a choice. All this responsibility is on you, and you never got a choice. Neither of us did." Clay said. G looked away again.

"So would you? Would you change it?" Clay asked, almost a whisper.

G didn't respond for a while either. Clay thought he was just going to ignore the question. He sighed and looked back at the stars.

"No, I wouldn't." G finally said, then stood up. "We both need rest. Go home, Dream." He said. Clay stood up too, and the pair faced each other.

"See you later... super goggles." Clay smirked, and despite G having expressed his distaste in the nickname, Clay could see a small smile on his face, quickly suppressed by a huff of annoyance.

"Don't call me super goggles." G said.

"Fine, fine. Bye Goggles." Dream said, saluting and jumping to the smaller neighbouring building.

"Dream!"

coworkers? sure...



# There's an imposter among us

## Chapter Summary

George gets a text that Nick is trapped at the school with a villain

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Aquamarine."

"That's a gem? I thought that was a colour." George said. Phil held the necklace up to the light.

"It's a colour and a gem. Definitely aquamarine. Would you like a box for this one too?" He asked George. George nodded, and Phil took the bracelet out the back of the store.

George felt his phone buzz, so he pulled it out and saw a text from Nick.

**Pandas**

hey

**Gogywogy**

what

**Pandas**

rude

**Gogywogy**

what do you want

**Pandas**

guess what! there's a supervillain  
AT the school rn. I'm filming it  
and when Gnotfound and  
Dream show up I can video  
them and it will be epiccc

**Gogywogy**

What? What kind of villain? Are  
you ok? You should leave rn, Nick

**Pandas**

Pleeease, this bitch don't stand a  
chance against me.

**Gogywogy**

Who is it? What are they doing?

Nick?

Are you ok? Nick?

"Here you go." Phil said, handing the box with the bracelet to George, who took it and pocketed his phone.

"Thanks Mr Phil, bye!" George said, handing him some money and then sprinting out of the store towards school.

Nick's in danger. George needs to find somewhere he can change. He saw an alleyway and ran towards it.

"Hey! George!" He heard a voice and froze, turning around. Clay jogged over. "Are you ok? You look-"

"Nick's at the school, but there's a supervillain." George quickly said, continuing his mission, now in the direction of the school. George can't change when Clay is here, so will make up an excuse soon. He at least needs to check Nick is ok. Clay's eyes went wide and he ran alongside George.

"What? A villain?" He asked.

"He texted me, but stopped replying." George said, beginning to stress as he checked his phone again.

"I'm sure he's ok. Oh, shit. I dropped my phone back there. You keep going, go find Nick. I'll catch up." Clay said. George nodded, not stopping running. Clay just gave him the perfect chance to change.

George reached the school, and ran inside. He was trying to find a classroom to change into.

He turned a corner and saw a familiar brunette walking away. "Nick!" George called, and his friend turned around. George let out a breath of relief and ran over, hugging his friend.

"What the hell, man? Text me back, you got me so worried." George said.

"Oh, sorry bro. I was distracted." Nick said, as they separated.

"Who is the villain? What are they doing? Where are they?" George asked.

"Not sure. Well, actually I do know. They are causing chaos to try and bring Dream and GNotFound to the school so they can take their jewels." Nick said. George looked at him.

"What are they doing to cause chaos? And how do you know that? Where are they? We should leave." George said, taking Nick's hand and pulling him along the hall.

"Oh, you know. Just doing what villains usually do." Nick said.

They turned a corner and George gasped. There was a few people in the corridor who were injured. One was passed out. George let go of Nick and ran to the girl.

"Oh my God. What happened? She's bleeding." George said, noticing the large gash in her leg.

George pulled out his phone, to call an ambulance, but it was taken out of his grip.

"Nick? We need to call an ambulance." George said.

"Help is already coming." Nick said, holding up George's phone. George looked back at the girl. She was pale. He put his hands on her calf, to try and stop the bleeding.

"What did this?" George asked, beginning to panic.

"Don't know. But clearly Dream and GNotFound are not very good, since they haven't arrived yet." Nick yawned.

"Go to that guy, he looks like he's going to throw up." George said, pointing at a boy down the hall. George was trying to stay calm.

"He'll be fine." Nick said.

"Everyone, if you can, we need to get out of the school! Help is coming." George said to few people in the hall. Some of them were injured but they still managed to get up and walk down the corridor, towards the exit. A boy came over and picked up the girl George was trying to help, and he quickly carried her away.

"I don't think an alert has gone out yet, Dream and GNotFound probably don't know what's happening." George said, defending himself. He stood up and looked at his hands. They were covered in blood.

"Well, they are pretty useless. There are at least 20 people hurt in this school, for unknown reasons." Nick said. George furrowed his eyebrows and turned to look at his friend.

"There are?" He asked. Nick shrugged, flipping George's phone in his hand. "You've never called the superhero's useless." George thought out loud. Nick was acting strange.

"Well, it's true isn't it." Nick said.

"Can I have my phone back?" George said. Nick nodded and threw it at George to catch, but it missed him and fell on the floor behind him. George sighed and turned around to pick it up

"We need to get out of here soon, clearly it's not safe. We don't even know where the villain is yet." George said, kneeling on the floor.

"Oh, I know." Nick said from behind George.

George wasn't looking, he couldn't see the glint in his friend's eyes as he lifted the sword above George's head.

George suddenly heard a yell, and then turned to see Nick on the ground, Dream on top of him, holding his hands firmly to the ground. There were two swords a foot away from them. George jumped up.

"Get off him! What are you doing?" George yelled at Dream.

"He- was about to- hold still! To stab you." Dream said, struggling to hold Nick still.

"What?" George asked, looking at Nick. George looked closer, and finally noticed his eyes were no longer brown, they were black.

"What the hell are you doing?" Dream yelled in Nick's face. He was holding down his wrists. Nick smiled.

"Not much, *Dream*." Nick said. Suddenly, both of them flashed bright for a second, making George jump.

But Nick had disappeared, and there were now two Dream's in front of him. The one on the floor was grinning, but the one who had tackled 'Nick' had rolled over, unmoving. The Dream who was previously Nick stood up, and dusted himself off. He looked at his hand and saw the ring, and smiled to himself.

"What?" George said, in shock. Dream turned to him, and George saw the black in his eyes, through the mask. George looked back down at the Dream who was passed out on the floor, and then back at the one standing before him.

This wasn't Dream's projection. Something else is going on. George immediately turned and ran down the hall, but the blur of green jumped in front of him, stopping him. George started backing up from the fake Dream, who was now holding both swords. One was Dream's, with its silver blade and wooden handle with similar carvings to George's bow. And the other was completely black, shiny and sharp.

"Don't be scared." Dream said, approaching George with both swords. George had his hands out in front of him.

"Who are you? Where's Nick? What have you done to Dream?" George asked.

"That's a secret. Nick is fine, probably. I can't remember where I left him. And I'm just letting Dream have a quick rest." He said. George looked around, trying to find an escape.

"Don't be scared, George." He said.

"How do you know my name? Who are you?" George asked.

"You know what, I like you. I'll let you go under one circumstance." The fake Dream leaned forward with a smirk. "You call for more help."

"Why?" George asked.

"I need GNotFound to get here. Using Dream's powers, I can take his jewel. And then I'll take Dream's, which will be like taking candy from a baby. I can't take Dream's while I'm his copy, or I lose his powers. I need his superpowers to get GNotFound first." He said, gesturing to the sleeping hero. The villain didn't realise he had exposed his entire plan to the hero in question.

"Why are you doing this? Dream and GNotFound protect the city." George said.

"Because I want to be this powerful all the time. I can be anyone I want. But *he* said he'll take my power away if I don't get him what he wants." The fake Dream was now really close to George.

"Who?" George asked, but already knew the answer.

"Blade." He grinned.

George was frozen. He had no clue what to do.

"Now go, George. You're lucky I like you. Nick however, is very disruptive in class." The fake

Dream said, gesturing for George to leave, an evil smirk on his face.

*Class? Who is this?*

George didn't need to be told twice. He turned and ran down the hall, into the first classroom he could find.

"Mask on." He said, and let the familiar sensation take over his body.

He waited a moment, and then ran out of the classroom back down the hall. He hid behind a wall and peered around it.

Both the fake Dream and the sleeping Dream were gone.

"Shit." George said, and began to sprint down the hall, trying track them down. As he ran through the school, he saw more and more people who were injured. For each group, he told them to go to the front of the school where paramedics would show up. George tried his best to help, by helping people to their feet. But he couldn't stay, he had to find Dream.

George could hear sirens in the distance, and sighed in relief.

He kept going through the school, and finally made his way to the cafeteria, and saw Dream on the other side.

"Dream?" He asked, and he turned around.

"There you are! I was wondering when you would show up. I think the villain went this way, come on." He said, and George walked over to him.

"What's happened? What are they doing?" George asked, keeping his distance from the Dream with black eyes.

*Where did he put the real Dream?*

"Not sure yet, but they have sliced a lot of people. Come on, let's go." Dream said. George nodded.

"Ok, lead the way." George gestured for him to go.

"No, you go. You have the bow and arrow, you can attack from far away." Dream said. George nodded.

He walked around Dream, carefully keeping his distance, and walked through the hall. He could hear Dream walking behind him.

"Any ideas for what their power is? Or are they just a maniac with a dagger?" George asked.

"No idea. I think I heard someone say they had a black sword, and were hurting people. We should be careful, maybe follow the injured people, find out which direction they are heading in." Dream said. George nervously swallowed and nodded. He was walking through the hall, bow and arrow in hand, but he knew the person he was hunting was actually behind him. He was just waiting for the right moment.

He felt Dream's presence grow suddenly closer and George finally turned around, and kicked the pure black sword out of Dream's hand, letting it clatter to the ground. He held the bow and arrow right up to the fake Dream's throat. But the man was just grinning.

"How'd you know?" The fake Dream asked.

"Dream wouldn't have told me to be careful. He would have rushed forward without a plan." George said with a small laugh. Of course, he also witnessed him putting Dream to sleep. But the villain can't know that.

George then examined Dream. The fake Dream. He knows he copied Nick's body, and then Dream's. It was something supernatural, so he must have a jewel. But where is it? It had to be on him somewhere.

George looked him up and down, and almost missed it. He was wearing two rings. One with Dream's emerald, like the normal Dream, but also one with a pure black gem.

"I see you figured it out, *GNotFound*." Dream said with a grin, and then a flash of light absorbed George. His last memory being his own face, staring back at him through his goggles.

Before George fell to the ground, unconscious.

At that exact moment, the real Dream woke up, in a random classroom, his head pounding. He immediately remembered what happened. Clay had transformed into Dream, ran into the school and saw just in time, his classmate Nick with a sword, about to slice George in half.

Clay looked around, trying to find his sword, but he couldn't see it. He then got up and ran out of the classroom.

Sitting down at the end of the hallway, was Nick. Clay sprinted at him, and picked him up by his collar and pushed him against the wall.

"What the fuck? Dream?" Nick said.

"Want to explain to me why you were about to slice open a teenager's skull?" Clay asked.

"What? I didn't do anything, I swear. There was this person walking around, their face covered by a black mask, and they had a black sword, and I was filming them. And then they came over, grabbed my arm and said my name. And I don't remember what happened after that. I woke up here." Nick said. Clay let go of Nick.

He remembered shoving Nick to the ground, and saw how black his eyes were. The last thing he remembered was Nick saying his name, Dream, that was it. And now he woke up.

"Sorry. The villain must be able to change themselves into whoever they come in contact with. It wasn't you, it was someone who copied you." Clay said.

"Woah. That's epic! I mean, ah, man, that sucks." Nick said, laughing nervously. Clay looked around. "So where is this person now?" Nick asked.

"I don't know." Clay said, thinking. Then he remembered George. He was there when he tackled Nick, and would have seen the person transform into Dream. Clay just hopes George is ok somewhere. They weren't close yet, but Clay likes him, and wants to become good friends. He needed some more friends.

"Ok, listen to me, N- I mean, what's your name?" Clay asked. Nick grinned.

"Nick Armstrong. And can I just say I'm a big fan of you and *GNotFound*. You guys are so cool. I can't believe I'm talking with Dream! And he knows my name!" Nick said excitedly.

"Thanks, Nick. Now listen, there should be help on the way, but you need to get to safety. The person who changed into you was about to slice open a guy's head, and he seemed like he was your friend, since he knew you. You should find him and then get out of here. The guy had dark hair, brown eyes, short, British."

"George? George was here?" Nick asked, with wide eyes. Clay nodded in relief.

"Go. Now." Clay said, and Nick ran.

Clay turned around and started running through the hall. He had to find someone with black eyes, that was the tell.

He ran around a corner, but then bumped into someone and they both fell over. Clay looked up and saw GNotFound.

"G! You're here." Dream said, helping him to his feet.

"What's going on? I heard there was something going on at the school." G said. Clay sighed in relief.

"Yeah, there's a villain who can basically turn into someone by touching them and saying their name. They changed into me but I'm guessing they changed into someone else now. We need to find them." Clay said, continuing running down the hall. G jogged beside him.

"Who would they be now?" G asked.

"It could be anyone. The key is black eyes." Clay said.

Clay thought about it. They changed into him, since he had passed out. They easily could have taken his gem, why didn't they? Maybe if he had transformed into Clay, the villain wouldn't be Dream either. So the villain needed to stay as Dream. But if Clay is awake now, that means the villain changed into someone else. But why would they change into someone who doesn't have super strength and powers? Who would be better than Dream?

Clay looked to his left, into the goggles of G.

"Hey, G, I'm really excited for the date we have planned. It's going to be so romantic, I hope you'll like it." Clay said with a smile.

"A date? Oh, yeah, I'm... so excited. Can't wait." He said, but the sound of shock in his voice was clear as day.

"I wish." Clay said, and then tackled G against the wall, pinning his hands to his sides. "Where's G?" Clay asked, his face close to the fake GNotFound. The imposter just laughed.

"That is quite a cute nickname. What does he call you? Dreamy?" G asked.

"You copied me." Clay said.

"What?"

"Wearing rings is my thing." Clay said, and then grabbed the black jewel and tried to pry it off.

"Shield!" The fake G yelled, and Clay was flung backwards, landing on his back.

"Give me your jewel, or I'll kill GNotFound. Right now." The fake G said, his voice slightly

muffled by the blue shield surrounding him.

"I'm not giving you my jewel. And I'm not letting you even touch him." Clay said, standing back up.

"Is that a challenge?" G said. It was quite strange, hearing these words come from the mouth of his partner.

The fake GNotFound started sprinting down the hall, and Dream ran to keep up. G still had the shield around him, but Clay was counting the seconds until it would disappear.

They ran into the cafeteria, and now the imposter was holding a black sword, pointing it at the ground, where the real GNotFound was lying. The shield had gone.

"Move and he's dead, Dream." The fake G said, grinning and poking the sword closer into the real G's chest. It was a thoroughly confusing sight.

"Don't you dare." Clay said, beginning to panicking at the situation.

"Your jewel." G said, holding out his hand. Clay nodded, and started to walk forwards, twisting the ring on his finger.

"I wonder who you really are, Dream. Probably some pathetic guy who is no comparison to the "amazing Dream". You aren't even that amazing, you gave up so quick at the sight of your helpless coworker." The fake G said. Clay looked down, and held out his hand towards him.

"So pathetic." The imposter said, reaching out towards Clay's hand and about to take the ring off his finger.

But Clay grabbed his arm and yanked the fake G forward, and used his foot to kick the sword out of his grip, flinging it across the room. Clay shoved the imposter to the floor on his stomach, holding his hands behind his back so he was unable to move.

"He's more than a coworker." Dream said, and then pulled the black ring off the man below him.

At the same moment, the fake GNotFound disappeared, and was replaced by a man in a buttoned shirt and pants.

Dream heard a groan behind him and turned to see G sitting up, holding his head. George looked up to see Dream kneeling on top of a man.

"What happened?" George asked, standing up and walking over.

"I saved the day, like I always do." Dream said, and pulled the man to his feet.

George's jaw dropped when he saw who it was.

Mr Peterson was standing in front of him, looking extremely confused.

"Dream? GNotFound? What happened?" He asked.

"Mr Pe- uh, sir, you became a supervillain. What do you remember?" George asked. Mr Peterson's eyes went wide.

"What? Oh my. I arrived at work, I work at this school, but I don't remember what happened next. I think I remember someone speaking to me but that's it. What did I do?" He asked.



"Blade. Again. What is going on?" George said, frustrated. Dream held up the ring with the black jewel to the light.

"How does Blade even have so many of these jewels? Can I see it?" George asked. Dream smiled and got on one knee, holding up the ring to George.

"GNotFound, would you do me the honour of-"

"No. Cut it out, Dream." George said, rolling his eyes and taking the ring from his hand. Dream stood up and wiped a fake tear from his mask.

"Ok, we should go check that the paramedics are here. There were so many injured people. Also, I know you don't remember anything, sir, but you'll have to come with us and be questioned." George said to them both.

"G, do you know where my sword is? I miss Spirit." Dream said. George looked back to where he had woken up and saw a pen on the floor. He handed it to Dream who grinned.

"Spirit?" Mr Peterson asked.

"Dream's a loser who named his sword." George rolled his eyes.

"Hey, this sword is my baby." Dream said, hugging the pen. "I've given you many suggestions for your bow, but you're too lame." Dream said. George scoffed, grabbing the teacher's arm and walking away.

Eventually, everyone was out the front of the school. Everyone who was injured was being treated or taken to hospital. The police had Mr Peterson in their car, and Dream and George were talking with the police.

"Help! Dream! You know the guy you told me to look for, my friend George? I can't find him anywhere." Nick said, running over in distress and interrupting the conversation.

"You checked the school?" Dream asked, and looked concerned. George silently cursed himself.

"Yes, but I can't find him. What if he's hurt?" Nick said.

"Ok, we will go find him. I thought the school had been cleared, but maybe he's hiding out somewhere." Dream said.

"Do you think you can handle it Dream? I, uh, have to go." George said.

"Where do you have to go?" Dream asked.

"Remember our rule, Dream." George said, and Dream sighed.

"We can't know anything about each other. Whatever. Bye." Dream said, and then ran off into the school with Nick.

George said goodbye to all the police and then ran off down the street, and found an empty alleyway.

"Mask off." He said, and then he ran back out of the alley, back towards the school.

George took a deep breath and went over to a paramedic.

"Son, you're bleeding." The man said, and George was immediately sat down on one of the stretchers

"Oh, no that's not my blood. I was trying to stop the bleeding of a girl." George said, seeing the dried blood still on his hands.

"You were in the school? When did you get out?" He asked, grabbing some cloth and water to clean it.

"Well, I-"

"George!" George heard a yell, and looked up to see Nick running over, Dream right behind him. Nick basically shoved the paramedic out of the way and hugged George, who hugged him back.

"Nick? Are you ok? I was so confused. Dream tackled you and you had black eyes and then you transformed into Dream and I was so confused. What happened?" George said, his acting skills coming into play.

"It wasn't me. The villain changed into me, and then changed into Dream." Nick said, and then looked at George's hands, still covered in blood and his eyes widened. Dream stepped forward too at the sight of the blood. "Holy shit. You're bleeding." Nick said.

"It's not my blood, I'm ok." George said. The paramedic started cleaning George's hands, double checking he wasn't actually injured.

George looked at Dream.

"Hi, I'm Dream. Sorry about earlier, are you ok? What happened after the guy had changed into me?" Dream asked.

"I tried to run because he was holding two swords, but he stopped me. Said that he was going to let me go because he liked me and wasn't as disruptive as Nick was in class. He said I could only leave if I asked for help. So I ran and called the police. I hid out in the school for a while then snuck out of a window." George said.

"Wait, what? The evil guy was apparently Mr Peterson, George. Why does he like you, more than me? This is bullshit!" Nick said. George shook his head, chuckling at Nick. George turned to Dream again.

"You said the fake Nick was going to stab me. You don't even know me, but you stopped him. Thanks for saving my life, Dream." George said, and he was honestly very grateful. Dream shrugged.

"Anytime. Now I should probably go, but I'm glad the two of you are safe. Bye Nick. Bye George." Dream said.

"Bye Dream." Nick said, waving as Dream ran off.

"Oh my God he is so cool. I can't believe we met Dream! And I saw GNotFound! And Dream knows my name! And he saved your life. And a supervillain turned into me! And we almost died. Oh my God, this is the best day ever." Nick said, making George laugh.

"That's what you would call a good day? Why am I'm not surprised." George said.

"Why aren't you freaking out more? *The* Dream just spoke to us. Dream! He knows who we are!"

Nick said. George rolled his eyes.

"Cool." He said.

"Why are you such a loser, George. He's a superhero." Nick said.

"I told you I don't really care about that stuff." George said.

"Pfft. Loser."

Luckily for them two, school was cancelled for the rest of the day. The paramedics and police eventually left the school, and parents came to pick up the kids who had been dropped off. Since the event happened before school barely started, most of the students hadn't even arrived.

No one was injured too badly in the whole ordeal, and George was extremely relieved.

Nick got picked up by his Mom, who Nick immediately started describing the whole thing to with excitement.

George was waiting in the pick up spot, trying to find his sister. She got dropped off early as well, but she always goes to get breakfast before school with her friends. George was just hoping she didn't get involved with the chaos.

"George!" He heard a voice and turned to see Lexi. She jogged over. "I heard about everything. What happened? Were you inside?" Lexi asked. George hadn't heard her be concerned before.

"Yeah, but I'm ok. Dream saved me and I hid in a classroom." He said.

"Dream saved you? Oh my God, really? That's so cool. Tell me everything. Was GNotFound there? Did you see the villain?" Lexi asked, as they both sat down on the bench waiting to get picked up.

George chuckled slightly. His sister rarely ever showed interest in his life.

"George?" He heard a voice and looked up to see Clay.

"Oh. H-hi." George said.

"What happened? I saw everything on the news. Is Nick ok? I got to the school late but couldn't get inside. The doors were locked and the police said it was too dangerous." Clay said.

"Oh, e-everything's fine. Nick's ok, he went home." George said. Clay was still standing up. "Are-um, are you waiting for someone?" George asked. Clay nodded.

"Yeah, my chaperone. Mind if I sit?" He asked. George nodded, biting his tongue as his crush sat down.

"Are you Drista's brother? The Mayor's son?" Lexi asked. Clay nodded.

"Sorry, Clay, this is Lexi, my sister. Lexi, this is my... classmate, Clay." George said. They politely smiled at each other.

"I'm friends with Drista." Lexi said.

"Oh, really? Speaking of her, I have no clue where she is." Clay said, looking around.

"She was at breakfast with me, like we always do before school. I lost her when I found George.

She's somewhere around here, I think." Lexi said.

"Oh yeah I forgot she does that. You girls go to the pancake parlour by the school every morning, right?" Clay said. Lexi nodded.

"Oi! Clay!" They all heard a voice and turned to see a girl in the back seat of a fancy car. "Hurry up!" She shouted. Lexi waved at her, and George recognised the girl with the same coloured hair as Clay, was Drista. He's seen her around school a lot and on Tv of course with the Mayor.

"Coming! Hey, what is happening with the experiment? We will have to skip today right? And Mr Peterson is being questioned by police, so do we still have to come in Saturday?" Clay asked.

George hadn't even thought about biology.

"I'm not sure, we might still have to come tomorrow." George said. Clay stood up, and held out his phone.

"Could I get you and Nick's numbers? So we can figure out what's happening?" He asked. George gaped at the phone, unable to move.

Lexi stomped on his foot subtly, and George nodded, shakily taking Clay's phone.

"S-sure." George gulped, and started typing in his number, and then Nick's which he copied from his phone. Clay took it back and smiled.

"Thanks, George. I'll see you soon!" He waved and ran to the car. George stared after him, a lopsided smile on his face as the car drove away.

"You are such a loser." Lexi said, snapping George out of his daze.

"What?" He asked.

"You should ask him out." She said. George blushed deep red.

"What? No! I don't like- I'm not- Why would you-"

"George, I know you're gay." Lexi said. George spluttered, looking around to see if anyone heard. "I don't care, obviously. But George, you're gay panic is so obvious." Lexi said. George just stared at her, lost for words.

"Wh- You- you don't care?" He asked softly. She sighed.

"Well, you're smelly and weird and annoying. But I don't care who you like. You're my brother and I love you. But don't tell Mom or Dad I admitted that!" She said. George couldn't help but smile.

"Thanks, Lex. That means a lot." George said, and gave her a hug. She squirmed at first, but hugged him back.

"Ok, stop hugging me. This is embarrassing." She said. George rolled his eyes and pulled back.

"Also, please don't tell anyone. I- I'm not ready yet." George said.

"Of course I won't. When will you tell Mom and Dad?" She asked. George nervously bit his nails at the thought.

"I haven't really thought about it. I don't know when I'll be ready." He said.

"That's ok. But you know how supportive they are. It'll be fine." She said. George shrugged. He had no clue how his parents would react.

"Also your crush on Clay is so obvious. You either need to tone it down or ask him out." She said, standing up. George looked up at her.

"It's that obvious? Oh God." He said. Lexi pulled him to his feet and dragged him to the car that just pulled up.

"Shotgun." George said immediately and Lexi groaned and punched him on the shoulder.

"Fuck you." She said.

"Hey, language. Children shouldn't swear."

"I'm not a child!"

"Kids, get in." Their Mom put down her window and sighed at her two teenagers. George and Lexi got in, George sitting in shotgun.

"Hi, Mom." Lexi said when they closed their doors.

"Hey, are you both ok? You weren't in the school were you?" Lorna asked.

"I wasn't, but George was, and he still hasn't told me what happened!" Lexi said.

"George! Oh my God, are you ok?" Lorna asked, putting a hand on his cheek. George pulled away.

"I'm fine, Mom. I didn't get hurt." He said.

"Are you sure? Did you hide? Did you see the villain?" She asked.

"Yeah, I saw him." George said.

"You hid right? You didn't try to do anything, right?" She said, and she started driving away.

"Mom, do I really seem like the type of person to fight a supervillain?" George said. Lorna sighed.

"You're right, I was just worried. Teenagers these days think they're invincible." She said.

George looked out the window. "Yeah. Invincible."

## Chapter End Notes

CW// blood

Ok the best decision I've made in this book is calling Dream's sword Spirit

# A thing for danger

## Chapter Summary

George learns minecraft with his friends, but his sister interrupts

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George stretched and yawned as he woke up, rolling over onto his stomach and face planting into his pillow. His muscles ached and his brain hurt but for some reason, his body naturally woke him up at 8am on a saturday.

Not that he had good sleep to begin with. He fell asleep around 3am, trying to catch up on the schoolwork he had missed that week. Why he naturally woke up five hours later was unknown.

George groaned and rolled over again, grabbing his phone from his bedside table. He saw a bunch of messages from Nick and an unknown number, so he clicked on them.

He had been added to a group chat, and by process of elimination, figured out the unknown number was Clay. George immediately sat up, clutching the phone with two hands, and a massive smile on his.

*I got Clay's number.*

He named the unknown number and then read the last few texts.

**PandasClay**

Fair enough, it is Saturday.

**George**

Hi

*Hi? I sent Hi? Lame, so lame. Clay is going to think I'm so lame.* George thought, facepalming against his phone and almost sending a keyboard smash.

**Pandas**

Gogy!

**Clay**

Gogy?

**Pandas**

It's a nickname we sometimes call George.

**George**

I think you overdo the nickname, *pandas*

**Clay**

Pandas?

**George**

An inside joke from a few years ago.

**Pandas**

Gogy has stuck more than pandas. The only people who call me Pandas is George and Darryl

**Clay**

Oh I see.

**Pandas**

Anyways, why are you up so early George? I swear you never get any sleep, you're supposed to sleep in on weekends

**George**

I don't know, my stupid body naturally woke me up now

**Pandas**

Well, Mom told me we can't do the experiment today. Mr Peterson is still in custody or something. And we can't be in the school unsupervised or something

**Clay**

Oh

**George**

Our data is gonna be so whack

**Pandas**

Hey! I have a good idea! Do you guys wanna play minecraft?

**Clay**

Oh yeah, I'm down!

George cursed his friend. Nick knew George hasn't played minecraft in ages. George was hoping it wouldn't come up again.

**Pandas**

It'll be fun, right George? :)

**George**

Yeah

"Fuck you, Nick." George muttered, and got out of bed. He sat down instead at his desk and turned

on his computer.

**Clay**

I have a realm we can play on, I'll invite you both. Send me your usernames

**Pandas**

PandasCanPvp

George began to panic. He opened up minecraft, which he hadn't touched in several years. He clicked on his profile and saw his username. *GeorgeNotFound*. Well, he can't use that. That was back when he played by himself on servers. He didn't even play with Nick then, who didn't download minecraft until freshman year.

George frantically went to change his name, desperately trying variations. Until finally, one was available. He immediately pressed save and sighed in relief.

**Clay**

George? What's your user?

**George**

GeorgeeeHD

**Clay**

Cool, I invited you both :)

George got a notification from Nick, seperate from the group chat.

**Pandas**

Damn you downloaded it quick

**George**

Fuck you, I have no clue how to play. Why are you doing this to me? I last played when I was 10

**Pandas**

7 years ago? Shoot, a lot has changed. Good luck bro

George groaned. Surely not that much has changed.

George got a notification from a new discord server and he joined the call that Nick was already in, putting on his headset.

"Fuck you! Fuck you so much, Nick. I'm screwed. Hes going to figure out I lied about always playing." George said. Nick's laughed rang through his ears, making George grit his teeth.



"Chill out." Nick said.

"I will not chill out, I specifically told you not to bring it up until Clay suggest-" The sound of someone joining the voice chat interrupted George. "Cl-Clay." George said.

"Hey, guys. Did you get the realm invite?" He asked. George smiled when he heard his voice.

"Yeah, I did." Nick said.

"Uh, how do I see the invite?" George asked, as he stared at the Minecraft starting screen.

"You click on Minecraft Realms, and then at the top, there should be a little envelope. Click on that and my invite should be there." Clay explained. George followed his instructions, and clicked accept.

"Great! You guys can join now." Clay said. George hesitantly clicked join, and waited as the game loaded.

***GeorgeeeHD has joined the game***

"Awesome! Now what's our plan? Do we want to beat the game or just have a survival world?" Clay asked. George moved his character around in the game. *Ok, the movements are self-explanatory. Space to jump, WASD to move.*

George saw two figures standing in front of him. One had *PandasCanPvP* above its head. The other had *ClayBlock*. Nick's character was dressed in black, a red box on its front, with white shoes. Clay's character almost white hair, a black vest and ripped jeans.

"George, where's your fun skin? You're just a Steve!" Clay said. George couldn't figure out how to look at himself.

"Oh, I never found one that I liked. Where did you get yours?" George asked.

"Online. Mines an E-boy skin. But I added the red and white box on the front because I wanted to be a little bit like GNotFound. Kinda cool, right?" Nick said, his character jumping up and down.

"Yeah, you just get them online." Clay said, turning around so George could see.

"Anyways, so what do you guys wanna do on here?" Clay asked.

"I haven't done a normal survival game in a while. We could make a house!" Nick said.

"That could be fun. What do you think George?" Clay asked.

"Yeah. Let's build a house." George said. He looked around in the game. They were in a forest biome, and there was a lake right near them.

He turned back around and saw Clay and Nick hitting the trees, collecting wood. George went to a tree as well, and left-clicked it once. Nothing happened. George held it down and it started breaking. Wow, I am rusty.

He collected a few pieces of wood, and then realised there were messages popping up on his screen.

***ClayBlock has made the advancement [Stone Age]***

***ClayBlock has made the advancement [Getting an upgrade]***

***PandasCanPVP has made the advancement [Stone Age]***  
***ClayBlock has made the advancement [Aquire Hardware]***

"Aware hardware? Clay! How have you got iron already?" Nick asked, and Clay chuckled slightly, making George smile.

"I found it at the edge of a cave and smelted it. Also, where do you guys wanna build our house?" Clay said.

George messaged Nick on his phone.

**George**

I'm so lost, all I have is wood.

**Pandas**

Loser. Click E for your inventory. In the top it has a craft thing, make planks and then a crafting table.

"We could build it on this lake, it's actually really big." Nick said.

"On the lake?" Clay asked.

George pressed E and saw his figure. It was pretty boring, a 'Steve' Clay had said. George clicked on the wood and crafted it into planks. *This is fine.*

George somehow remembered that to make a crafting table, it was four planks, so he made one and smiled. *I can do this, this is easy.*

"Yeah, we could have it in the middle of the lake and have paths going to it." Nick said.

"Oh, that could be cool. I'll google some house ideas." Clay said.

George left the inventory and held the crafting table in his hand.

***ClayBlock has made the advancement [Isn't It Iron Pick]***  
***PandasCanPVP has made the advancement [Getting an upgrade]***  
***ClayBlock has made the advancement [Suit Up]***

"What the hell? You have armour! Clay! Give me some iron!" Nick said. Clay laughed.

***PandasCanPVP has made the advancement [Aquire Hardware]***

George realised he was extremely behind.

"George? What are you doing? You haven't even got stone yet." Clay said, and George nervously laughed.

"Oh, um. Sorry, my sister was texting me. She's freaking out about something." George said.

## **George**

How do I place crafting table

## **Pandas**

Oh my god you are awful. Right click. Then right click again to use it. You need to make a wooden pickaxe, so get more wood and craft sticks. Luckily you have a recipe book in the crafting table. Make a pickaxe and then you need to mine stone. Dig down until you reach stone and collect some. Then craft stone tools.

George did as he was told, making the pickaxe and then mining stone.

## ***GeorgeHD has made the advancement [Stone Age]***

"Wooo! Go George!" Clay said, and Nick cheered. George rolled his eyes, opening the crafting table.

## ***GeorgeHD has made the advancement [Getting an Upgrade]***

Nick and Clay's laughter rang through the call.

"Wow, congrats, George." Nick said.

"Shut up." George said, moving around in game. He suddenly fell, his hearts depleting by two and his surroundings becoming dark. "Ah!" George yelled, looking around.

"He fell in a cave. Good one, Gogy." Nick laughed. George's headphones were filled with a growling sound and it made him yell and panic-jump.

Something hit him and his hearts depleted more. George yelled again and tried running away. He was clicking maniacally, hoping to kill whatever it was that was attacking him.

Nick and Clay's laughter were still louder than the zombie.

"There's two! I can't see, it's too dark!" George squealed, still running around the darkness. His hearts were dangerously low.

He heard new sounds, still growling but he wasn't being attacked anymore. He could see the name tag *ClayBlock* right next to him, and he couldn't see any zombies anymore.

"Jesus, George they are just zombies." Clay laughed. George sighed in relief, and started digging down again, trying to get more stone. But he fell once again and lost another two hearts. He now only has one heart.

"My God, you seem to have a thing for danger, George." Clay laughed. George looked up and could see light now. Clay had placed a torch at the top of the hole he had fallen into.

"I think you need to fix your computer brightness, Gogy." Nick laughed. George started mining his way back up, meeting Clay in the cave who had already created a staircase out. Convenient.

When they reached the surface, George sighed. *Well that was fucking terrifying. Who made this kid's game a horror?*

### ***GeorgeHD has made the advancement [Aquire Hardware]***

"What?" George said, confused at the advancement. He looked in his inventory and saw five pieces of iron. He turned and saw Clay's character standing next to him, but he realised his character was wearing armour. Clay's crouched up and down at George.

"What? You gave him some too? No fair, give me more." Nick said.

"Oh, th-thanks." George said, a blush creeping onto his face. Thank God he was in a call and not real life.

"No problem, George. And no, Nick. I already gave you some." Clay said, his character running over to where Nick was.

George opened up the crafting table again, looking at the new things he could make. He saw the advancement in the chat for an iron pickaxe, so he crafted one and left his inventory.

George was about to text Nick, to ask what the hell the depleting bar next to his hearts was. But he was interrupted by someone knocking urgently on his door.

"One sec." George said to his friends, muting on discord, and then lowering his headphones, turning to the door. "Yeah?" He called out.

Lexi entered the room, a worried look on her face and her phone in her hands.

"What?" George asked, concerned.

"Mom isn't replying. She went to get groceries and said she would be back in time to drop me off at swimming practise." Lexi said.

"Well, she's probably just running late." George shrugged.

"She left at six." Lexi said.

"Six? What the hell? Voluntarily? What is up with my family and waking up early." George laughed. Lexi wasn't laughing though. "Ok, I'm sure it's fine. Where's Dad?"

"Work." Lexi said.

"I'm sure Mom is just running late. She probably ran into someone she knows and is chatting with them, you know how she is." George said, but Lexi didn't look convinced.

"What if there's a supervillain and she's hurt? What if she got into a car accident?" She asked. George sighed.

"Let me call Mom, if that will ease your mind." George said, searching on his phone for her contact and pressing call.

It rang for several moments, until it was finally picked up.

"Mom? It's George. Lexi said you were going to take her to swimming?" George said. There was silence. "Mom?" George said.

"Who are you?" His Mom said through the phone.

"It's- Its George." George said.

"I- I don't know anyone called George." She said. George felt his heart drop.

"I- I'm your son. This isn't funny, Mom." George said.

"Mom? I'm your mother? I'm sorry, dear. But I don't know who you are. I... I don't even know who I am." She said.

George stood up, his hands shaking. Lexi looked at him concerned.

"Where are you?" George asked.

"Um. I'm at a grocery store. There's a few other people here too, but they don't remember who they are either." She said.

"Wh- How? I.." George started to panic.

"What's going on?" Lexi asked. George looked at her.

"I'm coming to find you, Mom. It'll be ok. Just don't go anywhere. Ok?" George said.

"Ok, George." She said, and he hung up.

"George, where is she? Why do you look scared?" Lexi asked. George quickly turned back to his minecraft game, putting on his headphone and going to discord.

"George? You there? You weren't on mute. Is everything ok with your Mom?" Nick said. George's hands were shaking.

"I have to go." George said.

"What happened? Is everything ok?" Clay asked.

"I- I don't know. Mom doesn't remember anything. Apparently there were lots of people who don't remember anything." George said, his voice wavering.

"What? Where?" Clay asked.

"Grocery store. Sorry, guys. I have to go." George said, and hung up on the call, turning back to Lexi, who looked extremely worried.

"Ok, Mom has lost her memory, along with others. I'm going to drive to pick her up. You stay here." George said, grabbing his phone and wallet. Lexi stood up too.

"Wait, I'm coming too." She said as they walked out of the room.

"No, it's fine. You stay. I'll go check she's safe." He said.

"It's probably a supervillain. You can't go alone. I need to know Mom is safe." Lexi said as they went down the stairs. George grabbed the keys to one of the cars. The one his Mom hadn't taken to the store.

"No, stay here." George said.

"No, please don't leave me alone. What if the supervillain comes here. Please George." She said, her eyes filling with more tears. George looked at his sister.

"Fine. I know I can't have kids in the car without an adult, but I guess this is an emergency. So fine. Let's go." George said, and the two of them ran out of the house and into the car.

George doesn't drive very often. Being a teenager in this city, the laws state he can't take anyone under 16 in the car with him unless their parent is in the car too. His Mom always picks them both up from school because he's too lazy to drive himself and Lexi has to get picked up anyways.

"Which store?" George asked Lexi as they backed out of the driveway and onto the street.

"I don't know. Probably the one she usually goes to, the closest one." Lexi said. George looked at her, and saw how worried she was.

"Hey, it's ok. I'm sure she's fine and this will all get fixed." He said.

"What if her memory is erased forever?" She asked. George swallowed. He has no clue what happened or how it could be fixed.

Is this the Blade's doing? Is whatever happening at the store what happens to the villains after their powers are taken? Is someone erasing memories?

"I'm sure she's fine." George said again, reassuring himself as much as his sister, but his hands tightened on the wheel, knuckles going white.

They drove for ten minutes, and as soon as they arrived, both teenagers heard a loud ding on their phones. George parked and they both checked their phones.

## **CODE RED**

**New supervillain with power to erase memories. Everyone is advised to stay indoors. Call for Dream and GNotFound**

"It is a villain. I knew it." Lexi said. George's jaw tensed.

"Let's just get Mom to safety." George said, opening his door and getting out of the car, his sister doing the same. *I'll change once I know my Mom is ok, once I'm not with Lexi.*

The two youngest Davidson's ran into the store, immediately being met with the warmth of the heating. Inside was a mess. There was carts and food and stuff everywhere. It looked like an earthquake had hit.

George and Lexi ran further into the store, checking every aisle.

"Hello?" George said, when he found a small group of people. They all turned to him. "What happened here?" He asked.

"We don't know. We don't remember anything about ourselves, we were all just in this store." A man said. George and Lexi looked at each other.

"Ok, all of you need to take cover somewhere and hide out. Hopefully you'll get your memories back when everything gets fixed, ok?" George said, and they all nodded at him.

"Let's go." Lexi said, grabbing George's hand and taking him through the store.

"Where could she be?" Lexi asked. George noticed how shaky her voice sounded, and he squeezed her hand.

"It's going to be ok. Dream and GNotFound will fix everything." George said. Lexi was about to reply but she gasped and let go of his hand, sprinting towards a woman.

Lorna was standing with a few other people, but Lexi tackled her with a hug, and George ran over too.

"Who are you?" Lorna asked, pushing her daughter away slightly by her shoulders. George saw Lexi's lip tremble, so he pulled her away and put an arm around her shoulders.

"This is Lexi, I'm George. We are your children. I spoke to you on the phone." George said. Lorna smiled.

"Oh, right. Im really sorry I don't remember anything. You both seem like very sweet kids." She said. Lexi sniffled and George rubbed her shoulder.

"We are taking you home, where it's safe, while the villain is dealt with. Hopefully everything will get fixed and you'll get your memory back." George said, grabbing Lorna's hand and Lexi's hand and pulling them through the store.

"Villain?" Lorna asked, as the trio ran back to the parking lot.

"Yes. Someone with the power to erase memories." George said.

"Oh, was this the man in the brown outfit with the gun?" Lorna asked. George stopped and turned to face her.

"A gun?" He asked. She nodded.

"Yeah. I saw him shoot some other people. They didn't get hurt, but they couldn't remember anything either." She said.

"Do you know where he went?" George asked. Lorna looked behind him.

"Yeah, he's outside." She said. George spun around, and sure enough, through the window, there was a man. It looked like he was wearing a brown tracksuit, with shimmery shoulder pads and a belt. Half of his face was covered by some sort of material, and he was holding a very shiny gun.

Which was pointing right through the window at them.

George immediately reacted, shoving both his sister and his mother behind the check-out. Their backs were all pressed against it, away from the sight of the window. But they heard a smash of the glass.

George looked around. They needed to get out. He will be no help if his memory is erased. He wouldn't remember he is GNotFound. He wouldn't be able to transform. Dream would be alone.

"Get out from behind there." George heard the voice, it was young but the tone was intimidating.

Lexi was crying, clutching onto his arm like her life depended on it. His mother was holding onto Lexi's other arm.

George needed to get them out. They needed to get to safety. He saw the exit. There's no way they could run there in time before getting shot. He tried to think of ways to distract the villain, but from his location, there wasn't much he could do.

George tried to calm down. He needed a clear mind. He looked down and saw a wrench a few feet

away. It must have fallen from a shelf. Would that help? That's like bringing a knife to a gunfight. Pointless.

His arm was losing circulation from how tight Lexi was holding it.

"When I say go, you and Mom are going to run to the exit." George whispered to her. She looked up at him, her big brown eyes filled with tears and fear. She shook her head.

"Five seconds." The man said. George tried to pry Lexi's hands off his upper arm, but she wouldn't let go.

"Four."

"I'm going to distract him. Please go." He whispered. She was still crying but finally let go.

"Three."

George looked at the wrench, taking a deep breath.

"Two."

George reached forward, grabbing the wrench.

"One."

"Now!" George yelled, jumping up and running almost towards the villain, but down a nearby aisle. He heard the sound of his gun, and felt air whizz past his face.

George blindly threw the wrench at the man, just before he found shelter in the aisle. He looked back and saw Lexi and his mother quickly crawling towards the exit.

There was a grunt from the villain when the wrench probably hit him somewhere. George took a deep breath, back pressed against the shelf of the aisle, listening to where the villain was.

"Pathetic throw, kid." The man said. His voice was closer, and George heard footsteps near him. He sighed in relief when he realised the guy wasn't going after his mother and sister.

George started running down the aisle, deeper into the store. He reached the end and turned left, but he heard the shot of the gun, and whatever came out of it hit the wall where he just was.

He needed to transform, but he couldn't do it here. George looked down the next aisle, and almost had a stroke when the brown figure appeared at the other end of it, taking aim.

George gasped and dived back into the aisle previous. *What do I do? What do I do? Shit.*

He heard the shot of the gun again, and turned just in time to see the bullet firing straight for him. He was about to duck and fall to the floor in an attempt to avoid it, but his body was suddenly shoved to the ground against his will, landing at the end of the second aisle. George let out a yell and closed his eyes at the sudden impact.

He opened his eyes and jumped when he was met by the white smiley face mask.

Dream jumped up, grabbing George by the collar and pulling him to his feet, and then grabbed his arm and pulled him down the aisles. George was being pulled along, but his lack of super speed was making him stumble while attempting to keep up with the superhero.



Dream suddenly stopped, pulled out his sword, and turned behind George, holding it up. The gun went off, but George looked just in time as Dream's sword deflected the bullet.

Dream grabbed George again and pulled him along, zigzagging through the aisles. They eventually reached the 'authorised access' part of the store, and Dream threw open the doors, practically shoving George into the room.

"Stay here, keep out of danger." Dream said.

"Wait, my sister and mother are outside, I need to check they are ok." George said, as Dream was about to close the door.

"No, stay here. I'll check for you. George, right?" He said. George was taken aback, but nodded.

"You remembered?" George asked, and Dream nodded, looking over his shoulder quickly.

"Stay. Here." He said, and closed the doors. George backed away from them, but could still hear the gunshots.

George quickly looked around the room. Empty. He smirked to himself. Perfect.

"Mask on." George said, making fists with his hands and letting the sensation take over his body. He flexed his hands and stretched his arms, before taking off his rubber band and snapping it into the bow.

George ran to the door and slowly opened it, looking down the aisles. He couldn't see anyone, and the gunshots had disappeared.

He ran out of the room and through the store. It was practically empty. The villain and Dream had already disappeared.

George listened carefully, and finally heard a gunshot. It came from outside the store. In fact, it came from above the store. On the roof.

George ran out of the store, and looked around. He could see civilians hiding and trying to drive away. He heard another gunshot and looked up, behind him.

On top of the supermarket roof, was the brown clothed villain and Dream. He was dodging and deflecting the bullets with his sword.

"Give me your jewel, before I erase your memory and take it from you myself." The villain said.

Neither of them had seen George yet, so he used this to his advantage. George ran around the side of the store, to the side where the villain was closer to. He looked up, ready to jump up. But someone tugged on his arm.

"Help! My brother is still inside." He heard a girls voice and turned to see Lexi. He froze for a moment, confronted with the strange situation.

"He's safe. We secured everybody inside. Once this is over I'm sure he'll come find you." George said, then turned back around, and jumped onto the window ledge, and then climbed up onto the roof.

He was behind the villain, who still hadn't noticed. George slowly got to his feet, assessing the situation.

Dream was still focused on deflecting the gunshots, trying to get closer to the villain.

Dream's eyes finally met George's, who raised a finger to his lips.

"Where's your partner, hm? Wheres GNotFound?" The villain said, taunting Dream. Dream deflected a shot with his sword and shrugged, somersaulting over another.

"Not sure. Probably busy admiring me from a distance. Thinking about how attractive and amazing I am." Dream said. George rolled his eyes, and took a step closer.

Where was his jewel? Brown, George guessed. He couldn't see any jewellery from behind.

"Give me your emerald." The villain said. Dream laughed.

"No, thanks. I think green suits me." He said.

George finally leapt forward, knocking the villain to the ground, and twisted one of his arms behind his back. The gun was stuck under the man's chest, as he squirmed beneath George.

"Dream, where's the jewel?" George asked, checking the man's wrists. Dream ran over.

"I couldn't tell. I saw he was wearing a ring but-" Dream said. George pulled the man's hand toward him, seeing the brown ring. "Found it." George said, grabbing it with his other hand, now only his knees holding the villain down.

"Wait, but it's not brow-" George took off the ring, but the man below him didn't change back. In fact, George was taken by surprise when the man turned around and grabbed his throat, slamming George to the ground.

The villain had one hand around George, and the other around the gun, which he pointed at Dream, who was about to instinctively attack with his sword to defend George.

The gun went off, aiming straight for Dream's unguarded chest, whose arms were above his head, sword in his grip.

George kicked out his foot, just managing to touch Dream's ankle. "Shield!" George yelled, and the villain was knocked back off of George. The blue sphere instead surrounding himself and Dream, as he intended it to.

Dream was knocked back into the ground, his sword falling from his grip, and he was clutching his chest. George's eyes went wide and ran to Dream's side.

There was no blood or mark where he was shot, but the force of the hit had knocked the hero down.

"Shit. Dream." George said, putting a hand on Dream's shoulder. His partner opened his eyes and blinked a few times, first looking at George and then around.

"What- What's going on? Who are you?" Dream asked, shuffling away from George, but his back hit the edge of the shield.

"Fuck." George muttered, standing up straight. He looked through the shield. The villain was standing up again, his gun firing repeatedly at the shield and a smirk visible.

"Who are you? Who... what's my name?" Dream asked, putting a hand on the top of his head. George knelt down in front of Dream and took a deep breath.

"No time to explain properly. Your name is Dream, you're a superhero. I'm GNotFound, you call me G. We were fighting a supervillain who's ability is to erase memories. He erased your memory. We need to defeat him by taking his jewel. I thought it was the ring, but apparently not." George said, twisting the brown ring in his hand, before pocketing it.

"Wait, what?" Dream said, but George grabbed him under his arm and pulled him to his feet.

"This blue thing is my power, it's a shield. It's about to disappear. Your power is Projection. When you say 'Project', you can create a replica of yourself, used to distract people. In a few seconds, when my shield falls down. I need you to yell Project, and you need to run at the villain. Use this sword, it's yours." George said, picking up the sword and handing it to Dream.

Dream stood there, mouth agape and the tip of the sword touching the ground.

"Got that?" George asked.

"What the fuck? No." Dream said.

"Good. Now!" George said, as his shield flickered and disappeared. Dream quickly turned to the villain, his eyes wide in fear.

"Project?" Dream yelled, but it came out as a question. Another Dream materialised, and the poor confused boy jumped when he saw it. George sprinted behind the duo, preparing an arrow in his bow, and aiming at the villain.

"Dream, go!" George yelled, and Dream obeyed, both of him holding out the sword and yelling as they ran at the villain. The man was taken by surprised, but started aiming at both Dream's.

George smiled when he saw that even though he had lost his memories, Dream's instincts and reflexes were still there. Along with his trust for George.

George lined up a shot, carefully finding the path between the Dream's, and shot the arrow.

The arrow hit the villain's right shoulder, which made him drop his gun in pain. One of the Dream's reached for the gun, and threw it away on the roof. That would be the real Dream. George sprinted over and grabbed both the man's arms once again, knocking him to the floor and this time keeping a secure hold.

"Ok... that was kinda hot, not going to lie." Dream said. George raised his eyebrows in shock. Even with his memories erased, his partner still has the same humour.

George looked up at both Dream's.

"Ok, whichever is the real one, I need you to find a jewel on him. It will be in a piece of jewellery, and it is most likely brown like his outfit." George said.

The Dream on the left kneeled down in front of the villain cautiously.

"Where would it be?" Dream swallowed.

"Anywhere. Do you see any necklaces or something? For example my jewel is in my pendant. Yours is in your ring." George said. Dream looked down at his ring.

"My ring?" He asked, and was about to pull it off.

"Stop!" George yelled, and Dream jumped, putting both hands up in surrender. "Don't take it off,

you dumbass. Just find his jewel. God, this better fucking fix everything." George said. Dream glared at him.

"Hey, I just lost my memories. I didn't even know my name and you yelled at me when I have no clue what is going on. I just did you a favour, ok? I could have died." Dream said. George scoffed. But he suddenly felt the buzzing against his chest, and looked down to see it flash twice. Five minutes.

"What does that mean?" Dream asked.

"It means I'm going to transform back soon. Hurry up, Dream." George said, Dream looked at the man's costume. The villain was stifling yells since the arrow was pushing into his shoulder.

"Could it be an earring?" Dream asked. George looked down. Sure enough, his left ear had a brown earring.

"Yes, take it off." George said. Dream carefully reached down, trying to take off the back of the earring before pulling the whole thing out.

As soon as he did, the man beneath George transformed. His brown outfit was replaced by a blue employee uniform. George rolled him over so he was lying on his back now. The arrow was still in his shoulder.

"Fuck!" Dream yelled, holding his head. George looked at him, concerned. *Please get your memories back. Please get your memories back.*

Dream looked up, and looked between the man and George. "So now you've got his jewel or whatever, what happens to him now?" Dream asked. George stared at him, dread slowly growing in his stomach.

"You- you still don't have your memories?" George asked. Dream cocked his head.

"Was I supposed to? Also, your costume is fucking weird. What is even up with those goggles?" Dream said. George's mouth dropped. *No. No no no.*

Dream's lips curled into a smirk and a wheeze left his mouth. "I'm just messing with you, G. I remember everything." He laughed. George glared at him and shoved him.

"Not fucking funny, Dream!" George laughed.

"Aw come on, G. That was hilarious. You really think I could forget you?" He said. George huffed and stood up, picking up the young man. He looked down at the parking lot, and saw a lot of civilians. A lot of them were filming from the distance.

George jumped off the roof, still holding the man and he landed on his feet. Dream landed beside him and a few people started applauding the pair.

"You know, you explained the whole 'superhero' thing quicker and better than that stupid letter did." Dream said. George looked at him, an eyebrow raised. Not that Dream could see most of his facial expressions.

"You know, the letter? The one we got when we got given our jewels? It was so long and complicated and took me ages to figure out. You explained everything in thirty seconds flat. Nice." Dream said.

"Of course I remember the letter. I still have it. It was really weird, I'm surprised I ever figured out what it was talking about." George said.

"Mm. Also, the ring is red. The one you took off him first." Dream said. George recalled the ring in his pocket.

"Yeah, of course. Whoops. Wasn't thinking straight." George said, cursing his colourblindness. Dream looked at him funny.

"So that was someone with the power to erase memories. But what happened wasn't what happens to the villains. When we took his power, you got your memories back, but you didn't forget what actually happened during it. When the villain lost his memory, he forgot what he did. This doesn't make sense. Whatever Blade does to them isn't this power. It's something else." George said, trying to figure out everything.

Sirens were heard as they pulled into the parking lot and George sighed in relief, giving the injured man to Dream. His pendant had started to buzz.

"I gotta dip. Make sure he's all good. I'll see you soon." George said, turning around.

"Wait, G." Dream said, and George turned back around. Dream hesitated.

"What?" George asked.

"I just- I don't know how I forgot- like, I- I don't know. I forgot- but, I didn't forget- you know what, never mind. I have no clue what I'm saying." Dream said.

"What?" George chuckled. Dream sighed.

"I just... even though I forgot everything, I still knew I could trust you. And I knew that I care for you, in some way. So yeah. It was... weird." Dream said, laughing nervously as he explained. George smiled.

"I trust you too." George simply said. Dream grinned back at his partner, before turning and jogging over to the paramedics with the man.

George also turned and ran behind the back of the store, behind a dumpster.

"Mask off." He said, and sighed when he was back in his normal, comfortable clothes. He ran back around the other side of the store, and back to the parking lot.

"George!" He heard a yell, and before he could even figure out who it was, he was tackled by two people. His Mom and Lexi. George immediately hugged them back.

"You idiot." Lexi said, pulling away and hitting him on the arm.

"Are you two ok?" George asked. Lorna pulled away too.

"Yes, I have my memories back now. God, George. I can't believe you did that. Don't do that again." She said, pulling her son back in for a hug again. George let her.

"I'm sorry, Mom." He whispered.

They hugged for a little bit longer, but eventually pulled away. When they did, George looked over his Mom's shoulder and saw someone staring at them.

Dream was leaning against a wall, arms crossed as he watched them. When they made eye contact, Dream came over.

"Your son seems to have a thing for danger." Dream said. Lorna looked shocked.

"H-hi. I'm Lorna." George's Mom said. Dream smiled.

"Dream." He said.

"We know who you are, we don't live under a rock." Lexi said, with a small amount of sass, which made Dream chuckle. He then looked at George.

"This is the second time I've saved you from a supervillain." He said.

"I guess it is. Thank you." George said nervously. Dream nodded.

"No problem, but I don't want to do it again." Dream laughed, as his ring started flashing.

"Anyways, peace out. Have a good rest of your day. It was lovely to meet you Lorna." Dream said, taking her hand and giving it a kiss on the back of it. George had to look away to roll his eyes. *He really thinks he is the shit.* "And you?" Dream asked George's sister.

"Lexi." She said, crossing her arms across her chest. Dream tipped an imaginary hat.

"Bye George." Dream said, and then sprinted away, somersaulting over a fence.

"Show off." George muttered.

"What did you say, honey?" Lorna asked him. George looked up.

"What? Oh, nothing. Anyways. Let's get home." George said, pulling out his keys.

"Wait, you drove Lexi here? George!" Lorna said, as they walked over to the cars.

"What? It was an emergency, Mom. She wouldn't let me leave her at home!"

## Chapter End Notes

CW// amnesia, blood

Also I have no clue what the driving laws are in the US, so I just made up what works for me and this story. Don't come @ me I live in Australia

Also Imma drop my twitter for the lols: @LottiarAT

# You're the smart one

## Chapter Summary

Clay learns the meanings of the four precious gemstones. Dream and GNotFound are called to deal with a wolf.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Are you going to finish your breakfast?" The woman asked. Clay looked up from his food, a plate of eggs, bacon, sausages, toast. He had been playing with his food for the past few minutes, absentmindedly daydreaming.

"Is father going to join?" Clay asked, hopefully. The woman shook her head.

"The mayor has to prepare for a meeting. He said he might join you tomorrow." She said. Clay put down his fork.

"He said that yesterday, Tracy. And the day before that." He said, staring at her. She sighed, checking her phone.

"I know, Clay. But he's the mayor, he's very busy." She said. Clay stood up, pushing his chair away from the table. He walked to the door of the room, fists clenched in anger.

"Clay." He turned around one last time to look at her. She had the same neural expression on her face.

"Remember you have soccer training after school, and tutoring when you get home at 5." She said. Clay just turned around and left the room, closing the door behind him harsher than he intended.

He went to his room, which was up a few flights of stairs, and gathered all his school things into his bag.

His room was big, and he knew it was bigger than most of classmate's rooms. One side of his room had windows that had a view the city, including the town square. He was a few stories up, which definitely would make things difficult for a teenager to sneak out.

If the teenager didn't have superpowers.

Clay has managed to figure out the perfect route out of his house from his room where none of the security cameras would capture it.

There was a knock at the door, and Clay swung his bag over his shoulder, turning to face the door.

"Come in." He called, and the door opened to reveal a man. Clay sighed.

"Ok, coming Owen." He said, walking over to his chaperone. Clay always thought it was dumb how he had babysitters wherever he went. Sure, it was for safety, his father was the mayor of the city after all. But Clay was seventeen, he could take care of himself. And he was Dream, but that

detail he wasn't about to share with anyone anytime soon.

He put his headphones in on the drive to school. Him and his sister were always dropped off at school early, so Clay had time to fill. Drista got permission to get breakfast with her friends every morning, since she was only a sophomore and didn't have as big of a workload. But Clay was supposed to go to the library and do work like instructed.

And sure, Clay was behind on his school work, since he didn't have as much time as usual, what with his basically full-time job. But he liked going on a walk before school, it refreshed his mind.

When he got dropped off, him and Drista thanked Owen.

"See you later loser." Drista said, before walking off towards the cafe near the school. Clay gave her a small wave before feigning the walk to the school entrance. But once the car had driven away, he abruptly turned and started walking down the street.

He didn't walk too far, just around the block and nearby streets. There were a lot of interesting stores he has passed, and occasionally he's entered some out of curiosity.

He remembered walking along this one street where he had run into George, his classmate. Well, Clay was hoping for a friendship with him, and Nick too. He liked his current friends, Wilbur, Niki, Fundy and Karl. And they were super nice and welcoming to him. But he always felt like a little bit of an outsider to the group, having joined it only this year.

Maybe it's just all in his head though.

Nonetheless, Clay was hoping to make some more friends, and his biology classmates seemed quite nice and friendly.

As Clay walked, he discovered a small store. It was a jewellery store, and it was one of the few stores open at this time.

Without thinking too much, he found his feet walking into the shop, immediately being met with the warmth of the heating and jingle of the bell from the door opening.

As soon as the bell chimed, a face popped out behind a wall at the back. The red-headed man had a cheerful smile on his face.

"Welcome, welcome." He said, walking nearer to Clay, who nervously smiled.

"Hello." Clay said.

"I'm Phil, can I help you with anything in particular, Clay?" Phil asked. Clay gave him a funny look.

"How do you know my name?" He asked.

"You're Clay Block, the mayor's son." Phil said patiently. Clay nodded. Right. He forgot that everyone in the city knew him.

"Oh, right. And you're Phil, Wilbur's Dad, right?" He said, clearing his throat. Phil smiled.

"Yes, I am." He said, proudly. Clay looked around the store. There was a lot of various jewellery in glass cases, all glittering with jewels and gems.

A bright blue one caught his eyes, the light hitting it just right that it reflected onto his face. Clay



found himself smile slightly.

Phil noticed where he was looking and walked to the piece of jewellery.

"Sapphire. One of the precious gemstones." Phil said. Clay walked closer to it. It was pretty, and shiny, but somehow not as bright as GNotFound's sapphire.

"One of them?" Clay asked. Phil nodded.

"The four precious jewels are sapphire, emerald, ruby and diamond. Some of the rarest and most valuable." Phil said. Clay found himself fiddling with his ring. Emerald.

"That's an interesting ring." Phil said, noticing the habit. Clay stopped and lowered his hand. "Quite plain. No gem?" He asked. Clay shook his head.

"Family heirloom. It goes with everything." He said with a small laugh, matching Phil's smile.

Clay looked back down at the sapphire embedded into the bracelet.

"You seem intrigued by the sapphire. Would you be interested in purchasing an item with it?" Phil asked.

"Um, I don't know. I just like it I guess, but I don't know if I would wear it." Clay asked. Phil hummed.

"You know, each of the jewels are believed to have different meanings, and bring different things to the wearers." He said. Clay looked up.

"It's believed Sapphire represents mental focus and order, inner vision and wisdom. Sapphires signify hope and faith and it's said they bring protection and good fortune to those who wear it and those around them." Phil said. Clay was intrigued.

"What about the other jewels? What do they mean?" He asked. Phil smiled.

"Well, Emeralds are the gem of intuition, creativity and love. It's believed they bring good fortune, positivity and confidence to the wearer. They bring increased intuition and perception." Phil said.

"Perception?" Clay asked.

"The way something is interpreted, or seen." Phil explained. Clay nodded.

"What about the other two?" Clay asked.

"Diamonds are a symbol of stability and dependability and trust. They bring courage to the wearer. Rubies are the gemstone of passion. They bring increased motivation, and a sense of power." Phil said. Clay nodded, finding all of this somewhat intriguing.

"How do you know what they mean? Is it real?" Clay asked.

"Well, it's up to you whether you believe it or not. Their meanings have been around for ages, different cultures believe different things. And almost every gem has a meaning. I've studied them because it's my interest. But it's just legend, and beliefs. Not much evidence to support it." Phil said.

Clay nodded, looking back down at the sapphire.

"It's quite beautiful, isn't it." Phil said. Clay smiled at the gem.

"Yeah. Beautiful."

The jingle of the door interrupted the pair, and Clay turned to meet the brown eyes of George. George's mouth dropped open slightly and his eyes were wide. Clay stood up straight and smiled.

"Good morning, George." Phil said. George was staring at Clay, who gave him a wave. George gave a quick smile then looked at his feet.

"What are you doing here George?" Clay asked curiously.

"Oh, um, I- uh, just came to visit Phil." George said quietly, avoiding eye contact.

The three of them were suddenly interrupted by a few dinging sounds coming from each of their phones. The sound was all too familiar to Clay, who already was expecting the alert when he checked his phone.

## **CODE RED**

**Call for Dream and GNotFound at town centre to deal with wild wolf. Everyone within a mile radius is to stay inside.**

"A wolf? Seriously?" George exclaimed.

"That's not too close to where we are here, but I suggest you two get to school. It's starting soon anyways and it'll be safer there." Phil said. Clay and George nodded, waving goodbye to Phil as they left.

"A wolf? How did a wolf get to the town centre? Like actually. And why do they need GNotFound and Dream? Can't they just get zoo keepers or something?" George rambled. Clay chuckled, and George looked at him, going slightly pink.

"I have no idea." Clay said. The pair walked to school, quicker than usual. Clay was racking his brain for a new excuse. He couldn't lose his phone again. He could say something about his sister?

"I need to go find Mrs Arley. Something about the worksheets I did in detention were incorrect." George said when they reached the school.

"Oh, that's ok. I'll see you later." Clay said. George gave him a small smile, again without making eye contact, which was a bit weird to Clay, before turning around and walking down the hall. Clay went the other way, pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to separate from him.

He went back out of the entrance to the school, jogging down the street, away from school students. He found an empty alleyway, and dropped his school bag.

Clay clenched his fist with the ring, and closed his eyes.

"Mask on." He said, and felt the tingling sweep over him. He opened his eyes, looking down at the bright green suit. He lifted his hands to his signature mask. He was always so thankful it didn't actually get in the way of his sight or breathing.

He reached into his pocket, finding his pen and clicking it, watching as it turned into his silver sword. He twisted the wooden handle in his grip, admiring Spirit.

He peered back into the street, before running out and away. His super speed making everything

easier. And he loved the feeling of the wind blowing through his hair, even though it was a much lighter blonde than his civilian hair.

Eventually he reached a road that had been blocked off by police. He fashionably somersaulted over the barriers and landed beside a cop, leaning his arm on his shoulder.

"A wolf, you say?" He said, and the sergeant turned to him.

"Finally you're here, Dream." He said. Clay lifted his arm of the cop, placing both his hands on the hilt of his sword, point towards the ground.

"So basically a wild wolf showed up, and we tried containing it but can't. It's bigger than usual wolves, and stronger. And seemingly more intelligent. We have experts trying to find the breed of wolf now but are struggling. It's already damaged a lot of property and injured a dozen people." He said. Clay nodded.

"Where's GNotFound?" Another cop asked. As if on cue, a blue blur landed beside Clay with a sigh.

"I'm here."

"I guess G Was Found." Clay said, earning a punch from G.

"If you make that joke one more time I'm going to quit." He said. Clay shrugged, but smiled as he looked at his partner. His shimmering sapphire in the pendant was resting against his chest.

"I heard the briefing. So what do you want us to do?" G asked. Clay couldn't take his eyes off him as he spoke.

"Kill it, capture it. I don't know. Do your *jobs*." The cop said. Clay saw how G's jaw tensed.

"Our jobs? Remind me again what *your* job is?" G said. Clay grabbed his arm and pulled him away.

"Chill." Clay said. G pulled away.

"It's an *animal*, Dream. This is a waste of our time!" G said. Clay sighed.

"They tried their best and then called us. It's fine. It's our job too." Clay said patiently.

"I know, I know. Let's just get this over with." G said, pulling out his rubber band and snapping it into a bow.

"What, got somewhere more important to be than with me?" Clay teased. G huffed, and Clay could only assume he was rolling his eyes.

"Exactly. You get it." G said, and then started walking down the street towards the town centre. Clay was quick to follow.

The police separated to let them through. Clay noticed civilians in the apartments around them, watching or filming. Clay took a deep breath. He hated being on camera, it made him slightly nervous. Quite hard to avoid if your a superhero though. And the mayor's son.

They reached the town square, and at first couldn't see where the issue was, but a growl from their right caught the heroes attention.

It was indeed a wolf. And it was indeed much much bigger than a normal size. It was bigger than Clay, who looked up into its shimmery eyes. They were blue, and looked creepily human-like.

Clay's grip on his sword tightened and he held it out in front. They were a few dozen yards from the beast, but with its size, Clay assumed it could reach them in a matter of seconds.

"There's no way that's a normal wolf. It's massive." G said, who Clay noticed had an arrow ready in his bow.

"It's eyes are so creepy." Clay muttered.

"Plan of action?" G asked, turning his head slightly to Clay, still keeping his bow aligned with the beast. Clay shrugged. Neither of them had taken their eyes off the wolf, all three very still, daring each other to make the first move.

"It's a dumb animal. There's two of us. It can't be that hard." Clay said.

"Dream, that's not a plan, that's an assumption. How about, I take the left and you-"

Clay didn't let him finish. He let out a battle cry and ran forward, spinning the sword in his hands. The wolf moved, its massive teeth bearing down at Clay.

The wolf charged towards Clay too, but just as it pounced in the air, the hero slid underneath, appearing behind the wolf. Clay ran and jumped onto it, landing on its back.

He lifted the sword in the air and slammed it into the animal's back, a triumphant grin on Clay's face. But his smile fell when the wolf barely reacted to the hit, instead flinging Clay off.

He landed several yards away, grunting at the impact.

"Dream!" He heard G yell, and soon his blue partner was by his side, grabbing him from under the arm and harshly pulling him to his feet.

The wolf was on the other side of the square, a large fountain between them. It was slowly prowling, keeping its eyes on the superheroes.

G hit Clay on the top of the head with the wooden part of his bow.

"Genius. Absolutely amazing. Great idea. Now you've lost your sword, and the wolf isn't even harmed. How many times have I told you to not be so reckless. It never helps and it just makes things harder for the both of us. If we take the time to plan, then we can handle these situations more efficiently. And less people will get hurt, including yourself." G said.

Clay looked down. "*Sapphires represent mental focus and order, inner vision and wisdom.*" Phil had said.

"I get it. You're the smart one. I'm the dumb one. What do you suggest then, goggles." Clay said, unintentionally harsh. Although he couldn't see G's eyes, he could feel the young man giving him a strange look.

"Well, your useless attack actually did help with something. It's mostly invulnerable to weapons." G said. Clay looked back across the square but realised the wolf had disappeared.

"Shield!" He heard G yell, at the same time he felt a grip on his arm, and the familiar blue shield appeared around them. Clay turned back to see the wolf hit the shield, right next to G, who had his

hand out in concentration.

The wolf stayed there, right next to the shield. The big blue eyes staring right into Clay's soul.

"It's a fucking animal! How are we struggling?" G said, frustrated, letting go of Clay and focusing purely on holding the shield. Clay walked closer to the wolf, its teeth bared when he was right in front of it. It was like they were having a staring contest.

"There's something about it..." Clay narrowed his eyes. "G... I don't think it's a wolf." Clay said, searching the blue eyes.

"It might not be the same species, maybe the same genus at least. But that's not important. My shield has about thirty seconds left before we get mauled by it, and we have no plan!" G said, his voice strained in concentration.

"No, G, I think.... I think it's a human." Clay said. G stood beside him, looking into the eyes of the beast too.

"A human." G repeated. Clay glanced at his partner.

"I know it's dumb, ok. But I'm serious." He said. G looked back at him.

"No, it's not dumb. I think you're right." He said, looking back at the wolf. The animal scratched at the shield, trying to break it.

G bent down slightly, examining the creature.

"What are you looking for? A weakness?" Clay asked. G shook his head, stepping to the right to get a better angle.

"No, I'm looking for a jewel." He said. As soon as he said that, the shield flickered, and then two seconds later, it disappeared.

Clay and G both jumped out of the way, as the wolf pounced, just barely missing them. The pair ran around opposite sides, both of them searching for some kind of item that wasn't just fur.

Then Clay saw it, a white cloudy gem glistening in the light, tied around one of its back feet.

"Back left foot!" Clay yelled, running to the fountain and jumping onto the top of it, just out of reach of the wolf.

"We have to trap it somehow, it's the only way to grab it." G yelled back. Clay watched as his partner dodged the wolf, shooting an arrow which hit the wolf in its shoulder blade, but it barely even slowed it down.

Clay looked around, trying to find something that could help. He tapped his foot on the top of the fountain in thought.

Then he looked down. The fountain. Of course.

He looked back at G, who was still firing arrows, and running around trying to avoid the wolf.

"Dream, are you going to help or just let me run forever until I transform back, which, by the way, isn't that long!" G yelled, and Dream saw the sapphire flash twice from here. G had five minutes.

"The fountain!" Clay yelled back, jumping down and running to help G. His sword was still buried

in the back of the beast.

G looked over and nodded.

"Do your thing." He said, and Clay put his hands on his temples, while running backwards from the wolf which was getting closer.

"Project!" Clay yelled, and felt the weird fuzzy sensation take over him, as a second Dream appeared beside him.

It never failed to freak him out.

Clay has some control over his projection. He gives it goals but doesn't control its actual fighting. It's based on instinct, and doing and saying things himself would say and do. Clay found it kind of cool, but occasionally creepy.

Clay and his projection ran around the wolf on different sides, confusing it. But Clay used a lamp post to launch himself onto the wolf's back, grabbing his sword to steady himself. His copy ran to the fountain, with G. Who were both standing there, bracing themselves. Luring the beast.

Clay almost got distracted, staring at G. He had his bow aimed at the wolf, his mouth pressed into a thin line. Standing next to his projection, Clay realised how much shorter G was.

*I don't even know what he looks like, but God, is he cute.*

Clay was almost thrown off the wolf again, but regained his balance, holding onto the sword as the wolf sprinted towards G and the fake Dream.

At the final second, G jumped out of the way, and the projection ran backwards into the pool, quickly followed by the wolf, who jumped on him, making the fake disappear.

At that same moment, Clay pulled out the sword, somersaulted off the beast, and landed in the water in front of the wolf.

He brought his arm up, sticking the bloodied sword deep into its eye, making the wolf howl. It tried to run but slipped, landing in the water and unable to get up.

Clay ran around to its foot, to see G already there, grabbing the jewel and ripping it off.

In that same moment, there was a flash, and the wolf disappeared, replaced by a man that Clay knew all too well.

It was Owen, his chaperone. Clay was too stunned to move, but G ran forward, lifting up Owen with ease and moving him out from the fountain. His eye was bleeding and so was his back and shoulder.

G lay Owen on the ground, and looked at Clay. He snapped out of his shock, and ran over too.

"I have to go, my pendent is going to start buzzing any second. Check how much he remembers, get him to the paramedics." G said, standing up.

"Wait, G. Are, um, I know this isn't really the time. But um, I, uh, are you busy? Tonight?" Clay asked, rubbing the back of his neck nervously. G looked at him. Clay hated how he couldn't see his eyes. Luckily G was easy to read from body language.

"What?" He asked. Clay swallowed.

"Do you wanna meet up?"

"Why?" G asked. Well that was not quite the response Clay was hoping. At that same moment, G's pendant began to flash and buzz. A minute.

"For, um, to... talk. About everything that's going on. Try and figure out our plan to fight back against Blade? You know, cause all this fighting isn't getting us anywhere." Clay asked, clenching his hands together behind his back.

"Ok, sure. You know, for a second there, I thought you were asking me on a date." G laughed, and Clay laughed as well.

"Oh, well if you were so eager for me to ask, then sure. Anything for you." Clay said, a smirk on his face.

"Oh shut up. You know, I could be like 50." G said, shaking his head.

"Well that would be an issue for you since I'm technically a minor." Clay said with a laugh. G hummed.

"Well luckily I'm also *technically* a minor. Whatever technically means." He looked down at his pendant. "Shit, I really have to go." G said, starting to back away.

"How about 9 on top of that one high school? The one we were at the other day fighting the villain that changed into us." Clay said, calling out to G.

"Sounds good." G replied, turning around. But before he ran away, he turned back to look at Clay. "Also, Dream. I'm not 'the smart one'. You're smart too, just impulsive. But you're very.... intuitive. Yeah. Intuitive. You're an idiot, but you are not stupid, Dream." G said, with a small, kind smile, before he turned back around and sprinted away.

A blush began to creep up Clay's face mostly disguised by the mask. He watched as G ran away, slightly hoping his partner would change back in front of him. So he could know who the boy behind the mask is.

The one who had laughed at the thought of a date.

And Clay supposed it was a stupid idea. They were superhero's. They don't even know each other's names.

But that didn't stop the feeling of butterflies in his stomach at the thought of a one-on-one conversation tonight with G. Or when he had said that Clay wasn't stupid.

"He doesn't think I'm stupid." Clay whispered to himself, a smile wide on his face.

A groan snapped him out of his thoughts. *Oh yeah, the bleeding man.* And Clay bent down to Owen's level.

"It's going to be ok, O-sir the paramedics are right here." Clay said, when he saw people and cops running over.

"What-what happened?" Owen asked, clutching his eye.

"You were a wolf. Which is low-key kinda cool." Clay said, moving out of the way so the paramedics could do their thing. He wondered how on earth his chaperone could have become a

wolf between the time he was dropped off and the alert sent out.

He felt a buzz on his hand. Five minutes.

He quickly spoke with the cops, explaining what happened, before he too, ran off. He was several blocks from the school, and the alleyway he transformed in. But he used his super speed to run along the rooftops.

If he had slowed down just a little bit, he may have noticed a certain brown-haired boy jogging as fast as he humanly could in the same direction.

George didn't have the luxury of those extra minutes to use his super speed to run back. He had to get back to the school in his human self.

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"I'm Mrs Clyde, your substitute biology teacher until Mr Peterson returns, since he has taken some leave. But just because I'm not your usual teacher doesn't mean you get time off. That assignment you were all going to start about the small organism will begin today. You must come in once a day this week either during bio class or lunch to do your trials. Since your first trial was several days ago, you'll be starting collecting your data from scratch. But I'm sure you're all experts by now. So you can begin." The teacher at the front said.

Everyone in the class groaned at the news. They had all secretly hoped they wouldn't have to do the assignment.

Clay and Nick were sitting at their table, and began to set up once the teacher told them too, putting on their lab coats and safety goggles.

"Where's George?" Nick asked.

"I saw him briefly this morning, said he went to see our math teacher about some worksheets from detention. I thought he would be back by now." Clay replied, setting up the microscope.

As if on cue, a boy ran into the room, his hair messed up, doubled over while panting. His cheeks were red and his shirt slightly sweaty.

"Do you have a good excuse for being late?" Mrs Clyde said to George, as the whole class turned to him. This only made the poor boy grow redder.

"Uh..." George said.

"Find your group." The teacher said dismissively, turning her attention back to her laptop. George looked over at Nick and Clay, and began his walk of shame over to them with his head down.

"There you are, Gogy! Was wondering where you went." Nick said, holding out his lab coat and glasses. George took them and slowly put them on.

"What did Mrs Arley get you to do?" Clay asked. George furrowed his eyebrows in confusion for a moment, then his eyes went wide with realisation.

"Oh, yeah, that, um, she just needed me to redo the worksheet but it took longer than expected." George said with an awkward laugh. He then cleared his throat.

"So. Yeast."



## Chapter End Notes

CW// blood

Can Dream just release Mask already please I need it

# Drinking on the job

## Chapter Summary

Dream and George meet on the roof of the school for a meeting. But it doesn't go awfully to plan...

## Chapter Notes

This is gonna be a long one

TW// underage drinking

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George groaned and let his head fall onto the table, his hair falling across his forehead.

"I hate everything!" He exclaimed, repeatedly hitting his head against his desk.

"Mood." Lexi called as she passed his room. He looked up at the door, seeing it was open. He picked up his school bag and threw it at the door, which hit it hard enough for it to slam shut with a loud bang.

"George!" His father yelled. George cringed.

"Sorry!" He responded, turning his attention back to his math homework.

Nick and Clay had asked him to play minecraft with them, but George had to find some sort of excuse to not play. And since he really did have math homework, he took this opportunity to do it instead.

George checked the time. It was 8:40. But he would rather be anywhere else than here at this moment, even if that means talking with Dream. So George stood up and stretched his back.

He has snuck out many a time. His window is conveniently wide enough for him to climb through, and it was easy enough for him to hoist himself up onto the roof of his house. He doesn't *seem* like the typical rebellious teenager who would sneak out. But it's for the greater good.

George went to his door, and opened it.

"I'm going to bed, goodnight!" He called out.

"Night sweetie!" His mother responded. George then closed the door and went to his bed and put a pillow under it so it looked like he was sleeping. But truthfully, George barely sleeps.

He then left through the window and made his way onto the roof of his house, and looked around.

The street he lived on wasn't too busy of a street, in fact it was a dead end at one end of the street, and it wasn't very well-lit.

So when George transformed, and began to leap from house to house until he reached busier areas, he wasn't easily seen, and was hard to track.

George knew the way to the high school of course. It was his school. Not that Dream can know that. They can't know anything personal about each other. Plus, if Dream knew that George was just some average, pathetic nerd, he would probably agree that George wasn't cut out to be GNotFound.

He was a bit earlier than the time they had scheduled, which is why George was surprised to already see a bright figure already in the distance, standing on top of the school, looking out across the city.

George made his way to the roof as well, and decided to scare Dream. He slowly snuck up behind him, and was about to scream and jump onto him, but when George reached out his arms, Dream suddenly turned around, grabbed his wrists and kicked out his ankles, tripping him to the floor.

George's reflexes came into play too, and he twisted as he fell, so that Dream landed on his side as well, and both heroes landed hard on the roof.

"Fuck, Dream!" George groaned, noting his shoulder that was against the cold ground.

"What the hell! Don't do that, G!" Dream said, letting go of George's wrists, and standing up. George sat up, with a scoff.

Dream held out a hand to help George up. George looked at it, before giving in and taking it, letting his partner help him up.

"Boo." George said with a light chuckle. Dream shook his head.

"I'm sorry, but *you* snuck up on me in the dark, so that's on you." Dream said defensively.

"Who else would be on the roof of the school at this time?" George asked.

"I don't know! A serial killer. Or a supervillain." Dream said, making George laugh.

"So. What was this about again?" George asked, after a few seconds. He moved so he was sitting on the edge of the building, his legs over the edge.

Dream moved to sit next to him. His legs were a bit longer than George though. It was a full moon that night, and it was high in the sky, shining down on the city.

George looked up at the sky, looking at all the twinkling stars. They filled the night sky like freckles. George smiled slightly at the beautiful sight, it reminded him of Clay's freckles.

George felt someone looking at him, so he turned and saw Dream. Who smiled at George.

"What?" George laughed.

"I can see the stars reflections in your goggles." He said. George looked back at the sky.

"You know you can look at the actual stars instead of the reflection." He said, gesturing to the night sky. He turned back to Dream who was still looking at him.

George cleared his throat, and Dream turned his head away, looking at the sky instead.

"So why did you want to meet again?" George asked.

"Oh, um. Well, we barely get enough time after our fights, since our stupid jewels change us back. But we really do need to figure out who is behind the memory erasing. Instead of wasting our energy on villain after villain." Dream said. George nodded.

"Oh yeah. Good idea. Well, we already know pretty much who is behind it. The Blade." George said.

"So the Blade has the power to erase memories? But how can he even do that from afar, and also, how is he giving all these civilians jewels?" Dream said. George thought about it.

"How does he have so many." George said, biting his lip in thought.

"How many magical gems are there in the world?" Dream asked.

"I don't know. We know hardly anything about our powers and where they come from. All we were given was the jewel and that stupid fucking letter signed by L. Who even is L?" George said.

"Whoever L is must know more about the jewels and stuff. Do you think they know how to find the Blade and how to defeat him? We have already fought and beaten a villain with memory erasing, it can't be that hard to do it again." Dream said.

George lay down, his feet still dangling, but his back now against the roof. He lay his hands on his stomach and stared upwards.

"Is it even memory erasing?" George said, thinking. Dream turned to look at him, leaning on his arm against the roof.

"Well, they forget everything, so it must be, right?" Dream said.

"I mean, i guess. But those people who did everything, they aren't violent people. They don't have vendettas against us or the city. The Blade would have done more than just erase their memories, and besides, that one villain that we did fight with erase memories, the power didn't work the same. You still remembered your actions even after your memories were restored. And your entire memory was erased, not just a segment of it. It's different. But how else would he erase their memories. And also get them to become villains?" George said.

"So your saying he has two powers? Able to erase a part of someone's memory from afar and also to make them evil?" Dream asked.

"I have no idea. Those powers are too complicated. Is it even possible to have two powers at once?" George thought out loud.

"I wish we had someone who could answer these questions." Dream sighed, lying down next to George.

They lay there for a while in silence. The pair just staring up at the sky. George was admiring the beauty of the universe, while Dream was smiling because of the boy beside him.

"This is weird." George said after a while. Dream turned his head to look at him. "It's weird being GNotFound, next to Dream, but not *doing* anything. You know? Like I'm just lying down on a roof with no worries as GNotFound. I'm so used to fighting people and running around while in this

costume." George explained. Dream smiled slightly.

"Its nice though, right?"

"Yeah. It actually is." George said softly, closing his eyes.

They lay there for longer, but George could feel Dream fidgeting beside him. He opened his eyes and tilted his head towards Dream, who was tapping his thumbs.

"You want to say something." George said. Dream looked at him, straight into the goggles.

"How did you know?"

"I know you, Dream. You never keep your mouth shut. What's on your mind?" George said. Dream sighed.

"What colour are you eyes?" Dream said quickly. George blinked in surprise.

"My... my eyes?" He said slowly. Dream nodded, stopping tapping his thumbs. "Dream-"

"I know, I know. We can't know anything about each other. But come on, G. You know my eye colour. It can't hurt if I know yours, right? There's hundreds of people with every colour eye. It doesn't expose anything." Dream said.

"Why do you care what colour my eyes are?" George asked with a small laugh. Dream just shrugged in response.

George thought about it. It was true, he could see Dream's eyes. Although, he had to infer himself that they were green and not yellow.

"Brown." George said after a minute of thinking. Dream lifted his head slightly.

"What?"

"My eyes. They're brown." George said again. A smile broke out across Dream's face, as he intently stared into George's goggles. George leaned away slightly. "Quit examining me. You won't be able to see them." George said, and Dream sighed.

"That's not fair."

"Sucks to suck." George said, making Dream laugh and punch him on the arm.

George turned back to the sky, but could hear the tapping again.

"What now?"

"You said you were a minor..." Dream started, and George sighed, but nodded. He probably shouldn't have told Dream that.

"There's no way you're that young though, right? Like you're small, sure, you've got the height of a ten year old, but-"

"Hey! I am way taller than ten year olds! I'm average height for my age!" George said, and Dream had to stop himself from laughing.

"Anyways, but your built like a young adult and you're way smart. How old are you?" Dream

asked.

"I can't tell you."

"G, come on. I need to make sure I'm not flirting with a middle schooler."

"I do *not* look like I'm in middle school! And if it's such an issue, then don't mess around with me." George said, sitting up as well. The two stared at each other intensely. Dream had a smirk on his face.

"I'm seventeen." Dream said. George yelled and covered his ears.

"No! Dream!" He said, and punched Dream in the chest, not even winding him.

"What?" Dream said cheekily. George glared at him.

"This isn't a game! This is our identities, Dream. They can't be revealed." George said, standing up. Dream's smirk vanished when he saw how angry his partner was, and he stood up too.

"It's just my age, and only you know. I don't get what the issue is with you knowing-"

"I can't know. We can't know. We are superheroes. This is our job. I've said it before, Dream. We are partners, not friends." George said. A flicker of hurt flashed in Dream's eyes. He took a step back.

"We can't know. You have to be Dream, and I have to be GNotFound. Otherwise this partnership won't work." George said. Dream looked at the ground.

"I'm sorry, but it has to be like this. It's for our safety." George said.

"I get it. We aren't friends." Dream said, his voice monotone.

"I care about you, I do. But you can't be friends with someone you don't know. That's not a friendship." George said. Dream looked up.

"Not even ten minutes ago, you said 'you knew me'. I get that this whole thing is just your job, the job you hate. I get that you would rather live your normal life, oblivious to everything, I know that you wish you never got your jewel-"

"No, that's not it Dream-"

"No, I get it, ok? I get that's how you feel. This is just your job. I'm just your coworker. I get it. I overstepped. I know there's a line, and I crossed it." Dream said, still not looking at George.

George's mouth was agape, words failing him.

"I-"

"Goodnight, G." Dream said, turning around.

"Dream, stop. Wait a second." George said.

But Dream didn't. He jumped off the building into the darkness. George could have followed, but he couldn't think of anything to say.

He sat back down on the roof, putting his head in his hands. *Good one, George.*

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"George." Nick whispered. George looked up from the microscope, and looked at his friend. Nick nodded his head subtly at Clay, who was sitting at the other side of the table, tapping his pencil against the table and staring intently at the wall.

George looked back at Nick and shrugged. Nick cleared his throat.

"Clay, you ok?" Nick asked. Clay stopped tapping his pencil and turned to Nick.

"Huh? Yeah, I'm ok." He said, now twirling the pencil in his hand.

"You sure? You seem kind of out of it." Nick said. Clay shrugged, looking at the table.

"Is there, uh, anything we can, uh, do? For you? If you need anything, that is. Unless you are actually ok, which is also fine. But if you need..." George trailed off, wincing at his rambling. Clay smiled slightly. But it didn't seem like a real smile.

"No, it's fine, guys." He said. Nick and George nodded. They realised they weren't going to get anything else out of him.

The bell rang, but the trio hadn't finished all their trials. It was hard to do with Clay not really participating. He tried to, but wasn't really paying attention. Something was clearly bothering him, but George didn't know how to help.

"How much longer? I'm starving." Nick groaned. George put the last slide under the microscope, and looked into the lens.

"Last one. Your stomach can wait."

"Hey, guys. You finished yet?" George heard a voice. He looked up to see Wilbur. His group was packing up their table.

"Just this one then we are done." George said. Wilbur nodded, glancing at Clay who was resting his chin on his palm.

Wilbur looked back at George and Nick.

"Hey, there's a party tonight, at my house. Some people are coming over if you guys would like to join." He said. Nick and George looked at each other.

"Tonight?" George asked. Wilbur nodded.

"Sure, we would love to." Nick said, speaking on behalf of both of them.

"Actually-"

"Great. Clay's coming too, right Clay?" Wilbur said, slapping Clay on the shoulder. He looked up and nodded. Wilbur frowned at his friend, who had slowly started packing up his stuff. "You alright mate?" He asked. Clay nodded, but Wilbur gave a look to George and Nick, who shrugged.

Seems like no one knows what's wrong with Clay.

"Anyways. See you guys tonight." Wilbur said, returning to his group. Clay picked up his bag.

"Have we finished?" Clay asked. George glanced at the last slide.

"One more, but it's fine, you can go." George said. Clay nodded thankfully, walking over to his other friends.

"Earth to George." Nick said, and George turned back around.

"Do you think he's ok? Did something happen?" George asked. Nick shrugged.

"I don't know. It could be personal. He doesn't seem like he wants to talk about it. Anyways please finish this stupid trial so I can eat." Nick said. George nodded, looking through the lens once again.

"I can't believe we got invited to Wilbur's party!" Nick said a few seconds later.

"I'm not going." George said, counting the cells and recording them in his book.

"What do you mean you're not going?" Nick said, waving his arms. George looked back into the microscope.

"I mean, I'm not going. For starters, my parents would never let me on a school night. Secondly, I don't want to drink." George said.

"Come on Gogyyy. Live a little. You don't have to drink, but surely come anyways. Be a teenager, sneak out! Come on!" Nick said. George had to stop himself from laughing at that.

"I can't, I have work to do." And it was mostly true. If there was a red alert, George would have to leave the party to go help. That's why he doesn't drink, apart from the fact he is underage. A red alert can happen at any moment, and they seem to occur daily at this point.

"Come on, George. Clay is going to be there." Nick said.

"I know, I heard." George said.

"And that doesn't make you at least a little tempted?" Nick said. George sighed, switching off the microscope.

"Yeah, but I'm busy, Nick. Stop trying to convince me." George said.

"What if I promise not to annoy you for a whole week?" Nick said. George raised an eyebrow, mid rinsing the slide.

"You have my attention."

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"How the fuck did you convince me again?" George asked, standing at the door to Wilbur's house. Nick chuckled.

"Doesn't matter, come on." He said, pulling his friend along into the home. It was bigger than George's, and looked rather nice.

There were already several people there. The music was loud and the smell of alcohol hit his nose immediately. George scrunched up his face.

"I hate parties." George said, but Nick didn't seem to hear him, instead pulling him towards what George guessed was the kitchen.

"George! Nick!" They heard a voice and turned to see Wilbur approaching, a bottle in his hand.



"Hi, Wilbur. Thanks for inviting us." Nick said. Wilbur slapped him on the shoulder.

"No worries. Figured maybe you two could help out Clay. You seem to be friends with him, maybe you could figure out if he's ok?" Wilbur asked.

"We aren't that close-" George said.

"We can try, but I thought if anyone knew it would be you." Nick said. Wilbur shrugged.

"Clay doesn't seem to open up easily. We've been good friends for over a year now, but I honestly don't know too much about him. That's probably just who he is, a private person." Wilbur said, taking a swig of his drink.

"We can try checking on him. But if it's personal he might not want to talk about it." Nick said.

"Yeah..." George agreed, reluctantly. He didn't want to talk with Clay. Every conversation they have seems to end awkwardly, at least for George. He always ends up rambling or stuttering and making the conversation weird.

"I think I last saw him outside. I think Karl was keeping an eye on him." Wilbur said, and then turned at the sound of his name, spoken by Niki.

Nick pulled George away, to the kitchen counter.

"Do we have to talk to Clay?" George complained. Nick raised an eyebrow, while he opened his bag on the table.

"Yes, he's our friend." Nick said, and then pulled out a bottle of vodka.

"That's not all for yourself, is it Nick?" George commented warily, as his friend unscrew the lid and pulled out a plastic shot glass.

"Obviously not. You're gonna have some." He grinned. George rolled his eyes.

"Pandas, no." George said. Nick groaned, but put it away.

"Man, if peer pressure wasn't bad, I'd make you get drunk with me." He said, and then took the shot, his face scrunching in distaste.

"What a shame." George said.

Nick had another shot, and then opened a beer, while George watched him. Then the two left the kitchen to the rest of the party. George rarely goes to parties, and when he does, it usually goes like this. Him following Nick around like a lost puppy.

"Gogy!" Someone called out. But it seemed more like a loud whisper. George looked around, and eventually saw a blonde boy at the top of the stairs, waving maniacally.

"Tommy?" George asked, going to the stairs, which had a rope and a sign saying not to go upstairs. Tommy came down the stairs and sat down in the middle of the staircase instead.

"What are you doing at a senior party?" George asked.

"I live here, dipshit." Tommy said in a tone. George made a sound of realisation.

"I forgot you were Wilbur's brother." George laughed.

"Yeah. But that son of a bitch told me that if he sees me downstairs, he'll beat me up. I normally would put up a fight, but he's taller than me. He also said that if I snitch to Phil, he will tear out my eyeballs." Tommy said.

"Why doesn't he want you at the party?" Nick asked, taking a large swig of his drink. Tommy scoffed.

"Something along the lines of being a "nuisance". And that I'm too "young" to drink. And I'll cause "mayhem" as he put it. All fucking bullshit, I might add." Tommy said, with quotations around the words that were most definitely true.

"That sucks." George said.

"Yeah, what a child." Nick giggled, receiving a glare from Tommy, who stood up.

"You wanna go, Armstrong? Cause I'll fucking beat you to the floor. You may be older but I'm taller and angrier than you-"

"Tommy!" Wilbur's voice was heard, and the sophomore's eyes went wide, before he scurried back up the stairs.

Nick pulled George's arm and the pair continued through the house.

"Where are we going?" George asked.

"To find girls."

"I don't like girls."

"Well I do, and you're gonna be my wingman." Nick said, pushing George towards a group of girls he had never seen before. They looked a little bit older, and some of them were taller than George.

He accidentally bumped one of them, who turned and looked down at him.

"Shit sorry. I'm really clumsy." George said, taking a step back. She looked him up and down.

"I, uh, I wanted to introduce myself. I'm George, and that's my friend Nick." George said, turning and gesturing to Nick, who had sat down on a stool, casually taking a drink and puffing out his chest more than he usually does.

The girls looked over at Nick, who started flexing his arms, casually.

"Anyways, it's been fun, but I'm going to go now." George said, finger-gunning, before quickly walking away. Nick has made him do that before. It never works, since this is George we are talking about.

George rolled his eyes when he left. Guess he will have to stop following Nick around.

He absentmindedly thought about Clay, and how Wilbur wanted him to check on him. He said they were friends, were they? How did George manage to do that?

"George!" He heard a voice, and turned to see a familiar dirty-blond boy staggering towards him. Clay put an arm around George's shoulders, putting a lot of his weight on the smaller boy.

"C-Clay." George said, surprised at the contact. Clay took a big sip of his drink, before looking back down at George.

"So goooood that you could come. You know what, you are a great friend, George. I bet Nick is very very happy you're his friend." Clay said. George stared at Clay, who was very clearly drunk. He was smiling lopsidedly and his hair was all messed up. He was also stumbling as he walked, even with his weight on George.

"Careful!" George said, putting an arm around Clay's waist and steering him away from the glass table the taller boy almost fell into. The taller boy started giggling at the near miss, while George flushed deeply at his close contact with Clay.

*If he knew I was gay, he would not be comfortable with this.*

George moved Clay to a free couch, and sat him down on it, separating himself from his crush as soon as possible. Clay sat up and put his finger-tips together like he was at a meeting.

"Have you ever been friendzoned, George?" Clay asked. George hesitated. *"You know what, you're a great friend, George."* Clay's words echoed in his mind from just moments ago.

"Something like that." George gulped. Clay leaned forward and grabbed George's wrists, pulling him to sit on the couch next to him. George left plenty of space between them.

"It hurts, doesn't it." Clay said. George looked at the boy.

"Did you get friend-zoned?" George asked.

"Something like that." Clay said, repeating George's words back to him. Clay lifted his drink to his lips and chugged the rest of it.

"Woah, ok." George said, grabbing the drink and pulling it away. Clay didn't need any more alcohol, that's for sure.

"I reeeally like them though." Clay said quietly that it was almost a whisper. George felt his heart break slightly at that. Clay likes someone. He must really, really like them to be this crushed.

"You- you like- who is she?" George swallowed. Clay leaned back in his seat.

"She...." Clay hesitated. "She's amazing. She's nice, and funny, and also serious, and ridiculously smart. They put up with me, and they are so so caring. And they love to help people, and even help me. They even protect me even when I've been a complete idiot." Clay said.

"She sounds great." George said, swallowing thickly. It was like he had been stabbed in the heart. The tingling feeling of heartbreak was slowly reaching his eyes. *Clay likes someone else. Did I really think I had a chance?*

"Yeah, they are." Clay said, a smile on his face.

"I'm sorry you were rejected." George said. Clay looked at him.

"Rejected? It wasn't rejection. They don't know I like them... no... I don't think. It was just... a fight. Just one fight, right? Right? And they didn't mean it. We are friends. We are!" Clay said, hitting his fist on his leg. George blinked at the movement.

"You're drunk, Clay. And you're confused. And upset. And that's ok, but you need to calm down. I- I'm sure whoever she is... I'm sure she'll like you back some day." George said. Although he was still crushed from Clay's confession, he still tried to comfort his friend. His friend.  
*Because that's all they will ever be.*

"You think so?" Clay asked, looking at George. George nodded. Clay stared at him for a bit longer. "I like your eyes." He said. George immediately looked away, his heart stopping in his chest. He cleared his throat.

"Uh. Thanks." George said stiffly.

"Brown eyes are pretty. I've decided this now." Clay said with a large nod.

George hummed, wanting so desperately for this conversation to end, so he could go find Nick. He wanted to go home, to be upset in the solitude of his own room.

"Do you have any secrets, Georgie?" Clay asked, and George felt something on his shoulder. He carefully looked down to see Clay had rested his head against his shoulder.

*Is that what gay panic is?*

George's breathing increased and he stared at Clay for a few moments. *He's on my shoulder. HES ON MY SHOULDER.*

"Georgieeee?" Clay asked, poking George's arm. George couldn't even picture how red his face must be. *Georgie? Am I hearing him right?*

"U-um. Yeah, I guess I have some secrets." George said.

"Me tooooo. What are your secretssss?" Clay asked, pressing his head against George's shoulder more firmly. George felt his organs start shutting down. Clay would be the death of him.

"Well, if I told you, it wouldn't be a secret would it." George said, and Clay grinned and started laughing. George almost thought he heard his voice wheeze for a second, but only for a second. George couldn't help but smile at the laugh.

"You're funny, too!" Clay said with glee. George's smile disappeared.

"Funny... too? Like... her?" George said, swallowing again. Clay nodded against George's shoulder.

"I need drink." Clay said, lifting his head. George sighed in relief. "Do you have it?" Clay asked. George shook his head.

"I don't think you need anymore." George said patiently. Clay groaned.

"You're so mean Georgieeee." Clay complained, leaning back against the couch. George tried to ignore the flutter in his chest every time that new nickname was used.

Suddenly, George's phone went off, along with everyone else in the room. George felt his heart sink, and he pulled it out.

"Where's my phone? I need to read it." Clay said in a rush, searching his pockets.

"It's here." George said, picking it up from where it fell out behind a cushion, and he passed it to Clay. They both read the text.

**ALERT**

**Dream and GNotFound requested immediately by mayor.**

George closed his eyes in frustration. How urgent is it that they sent out an alert at 10pm at night?

Clay stood up, almost falling into the table before George got up and steadied him.

"Be careful." George said. Clay waved him off.

"I'm fineeee. I have to go." Clay said, beginning to walk away. George cautiously followed, worried he would fall.

"Where are you going? Just sit down, maybe ask Wilbur if you can crash here for the night?" George said, following the dirty-blond. Clay grinned.

"I have to go. Duty calls!" Clay said. George cocked his head in confusion.

"Duty calls?" George asked, then realised Clay was heading towards the bathroom. "Oh. Right. Ok, well I'm going to go let Wilbur know you might stay the night. Uh, yeah." George cleared his throat and speedily walked away.

He walked back the way he had come, but could no longer see Nick anywhere. The group of girls were all still there though, so George assumed Nick had found Quackity or someone to hang out with instead.

George sighed in relief when he found Wilbur. He was sitting with Niki and Karl, so George went over. The three of them looked up when he did.

"Hey, I found Clay. He's quite wasted." George said.

"Oh, shoot. I left Karl with him but... oh. Karl." Wilbur said. Karl's eyes went wide.

"Oops." Karl said.

"Anyway. He said he was upset because he got friendzoned. I'm not sure who the girl is but he's really bummed. He's in the bathroom now but he might have to stay the night if that's all good." George said. Wilbur nodded.

"Yeah, of course. Karl, go figure out where you lost him." Wilbur said. Karl chuckled and nodded.

"Thanks for having us Wilbur, but I have to go now. My parents gave me a curfew of 10:30." George lied.

"Oh, no problem, George. Thanks for coming and checking on Clay." Wilbur said. George nodded, and then left the room, while pulling out his phone.

**George**

I've gone home, I felt a bit sick. Text me when you get home safe, and don't drink too much

**Pandas**

Oj Dad

Drryl is hee anb hes sobar so he si drivemehowme

**George**

Tell Darryl thanks

Deciphering Nick's drunk texts has become a talent of George's.

George left the house and started walking down the street. He could still hear the music even a block away. He was surprised the cops haven't come yet. *I wouldn't be surprised if they called me to shut down the party. Seems like the cops don't know how to do their jobs at all.*

George found an alleyway, one of his most common ones to transform in. "Mask on."

He then started running instead, to the meeting spot where he always meets Dream before going to the mayor's office. George disliked the mayor a lot, and wouldn't want to face him alone.

He reached the park, and wasn't surprised to see Dream wasn't here yet. George got his act together surprisingly quickly for the short notice.

He sat down on one of the swings and let his feet drag along the ground.

Clay likes someone else. George kicked himself for ever having a sliver of hope that maybe, *maybe*, Clay *could* like him. But no. And that wasn't Clay's fault. George never should have let himself have hope.

Along with that, he's probably ruined his relationship with Dream.

A loud snap came from behind and George jumped up, hand on his rubber band ready to go. But instead he saw the yellow- no, green figure walking towards him. George relaxed.

"It's just you." George sighed in relief.

"Just me? Wooooow ok. I know we aren't friendssss and you *hate* me but you could be least a bit nice." Dream said, and then sat down in the swing, giggling as he started rocking.

"I never said I hate you." George said, watching Dream carefully.

"Well." Dream shrugged, and then stood up, and linked his arm with George. "Let's go home." He said, and started pulling George, who stopped.

"Dream, are you drunk?" He asked. Dream giggled. "What do you mean home? We have to go to the mayor." George said.

"Right. Mayor. To the mansion! Let's gooo!" Dream said, and tried pulling George again, who yet again pulled away.

"You are, aren't you. Jesus christ, Dream." George said angrily, and started walking away.

"What?" Dream asked, walking backwards in front of George.

"How irresponsible are you? Getting drunk when you know that any second there could be a red alert! What if we had to fight!" George scolded him. Dream stopped and looked down at his feet, like a toddler caught stealing.

"I keep messing up." Dream said.

"Yeah, you do. Come on." George said, and started pulling Dream this time, who stumbled as he was pulled.

The walk was mostly quiet. George had nothing to say and Dream had already said everything. Eventually, they arrived at the mansion and George finally spoke.

"I'll do the talking. Just try to sit still and don't throw up." He said, shaking his arm that Dream was linked to. His eye lids were half closed.

"Yessir." Dream slurred. George rolled his eyes. The pair were escorted through the house and to the office. George recalled the last time they were here, when they had the argument. He was not going to bring it up this time.

When they entered, there were multiple people in the room, all looking freaked out. The mayor was sitting down in front of his computer, his forehead wrinkles extremely prominent.

"Sir." George nodded at the mayor, who looked up when they arrived. He shook Dream off his arm, and Dream stood up straight for a moment, before leaning on the back of the chair in front of him.

"GNotFound. Dream. Finally you're here." The mayor said, and people started clearing the room. He gestured for them to sit, so Dream and George both sat in their usual seats. Dream leaned his head back and closed his eyes.

"What was so urgent?" George asked. The mayor picked up a remote and pressed a button, and a large projector turned on to the right of them. George turned to face it, and nudged Dream to as well.

There was a second of black screen, before a figure appeared on it. George gasped.

"GNotFound. Dream. I have a message for you." The person said. George knew immediately who it was. The news stories described him exactly like this.

He had a red mantle across his shoulders, the cloak extending down his arms and tied across his chest. Upon his head was a crown. Gold, and littered with gems. His hair was long and pink, in a singular plait, and upon his face, like every superhero and supervillain they fight, a mask. But this mask was a boar, with tusks protruding from it. The only human aspect of the man on the screen was his mouth, his eyes, and his teeth that were bared into a crooked smile.

The Blade.

"I'm sure you know who I am. But I'll introduce myself anyways. I am The Blade. You might have heard of me from an... incident... a few years ago." He said.

George looked at the mayor, whose face was neutral. He had probably watched this video many times already. Dream was squinting at the screen, looking confused.

"I've heard you're trying to figure out how to stop all of this mayhem. I bet you're tired, of all this fighting and transforming. It wears you out, I know. But this can all end. I can stop making soldiers." Blade said.

"Soldiers? Soldiers! They are slaves!" George exclaimed.

"All I need is one, simple thing. Or rather... three simple things." Blade said. George furrowed his eyebrows. He already knew what Blade want. His sapphire and Dream's emerald. But what's the third.

"I want GNotFound's Sapphire, the jewel of Protection. I want Dream's Emerald, the jewel of

Projection. And I want the Liberator. I know he's alive. I know he's in hiding and I *know* he has the others. He gave you both your jewels so he can give me the rest." Blade said. George's eyes went wide, and so did Dream. Dream turned to George.

"L." Dream said, with a small giggle. *Liberator*.

"So this is a... request, I might say. If Dream and GNotFound don't give me their jewels and the identity of the Liberator, which I *know* they know. Then I will create Doomsday part two. I will rain hellfire on this city until I get what I want. I've been biding my time, getting more powerful once again. And I'm almost there. I am stronger and faster and more experienced than these two *kids* who are playing superheroes. And The Blade. Never. Dies."

The screen turned off, and silence filled the room for a moment, before George and Dream both turned to the mayor, who leaned back in his chair, looking at them expectantly. The three of them stared at each other for several moments.

"That motherfucker thinks he can tell me what to do. Hell no, I ain't giving him my emerald. I like it. Green is my favourite colour. That pig isn't coming anywhere near my ring." Dream suddenly said, cradling his ring like it was a child. The mayor let out a noise mixed between shock and anger at the outburst, and George leaned forward, putting a hand on the table.

"Sorry about him, he's... not himself tonight." George said, looking at Dream who twisted in his chair, throwing his legs over one side of the armrest, and leaning backwards so his head was leaning against George's arm.

"He's under the influence." The mayor said in angry tone.

"No, he's not. He's just..."

"Extremely tipsy. I'll drink to that, where's my beer?" Dream said, looking around. George closed his eyes in annoyance. The mayor's face was growing redder by the second.

"I think we should get back to the topic at hand." George cleared his throat.

"That seems like something that should be discussed *professionally*. Meanwhile your partner here has had too much to drink!" The mayor said. Dream looked at him, then put two fingers to his own neck.

"I haven't had toooo much. I can still feel my pulse." Dream said. George put his hand over Dream's mouth, and then smiled at the mayor.

"Can we just pretend he's not here. You can scold him later, and trust me, I will too, but right now, there's more important things to discuss." George said.

He was expecting more push-back from Dream, but when he looked down, was surprised to see Dream just sitting there, looking up at George upside-down, ignoring the hand covering his mouth. Dream blinked at George, just staring at him with big eyes through the mask

"Fine. But I want a good explanation for this behaviour." The mayor said, annoyance still clear on his face. George nodded, and removed his hand from Dream's mouth.

"This was sent in twenty-two minutes ago. By an unknown, untraceable source." The mayor said. George nodded.

"Well?" The mayor asked. George looked at him, puzzled.



"Well, what?"

"Well, what are you going to do about this?" The mayor said. George sat there for a moment, perplexed. He glanced down at Dream, whose head started to lean against him a little more, and he noticed that his eyes had closed.

"Wh- I- I don't know! I just saw the video two minutes ago." George said, looking back at the Mayor.

"Ok, but what's your plan."

"I don't have a plan yet. How can I? I also have nothing to go off of. I can't find out where the Blade is or who he is. All we have is that video. I don't know what to do yet." George said, slightly frustrated.

"Well, you're GNotFound. Figure something out, it's your job."

George felt his hands ball into fists, and his jaw tense.

But something grabbed his hand, and when he looked, he saw Dream holding his hand subtly. Dream still had his eyes closed, and still lying down in the chair. But he had grabbed George's hand. The action somehow made George calm down slightly.

George took a deep breath.

"I promise that me and Dream will figure it out. We will prevent this 'doomsday part two', and without giving up our jewels." George said.

"Well you better do it soon. Blade said he's stronger. He didn't give you a time limit." Block said. George nodded.

"I know that. We will figure it out."

"What if you don't."

"We will."

"How can you be so sure, GNotFound." The mayor said, leaning forward on his desk. "You can barely defeat one weak inexperienced supervillain, and you do it basically everyday. How can you defeat the Blade, who is older, more experienced, and better than you?" He asked.

George felt the warmth in his hand, noticing that Dream was rubbing it slowly with his thumb. He took another deep breath.

"Because it's my job. It's our job to protect the city and we always find a way." George said. The mayor sat back, examining George.

"Report back to me soon." The mayor said, and George took that as a dismiss. He stood up, letting go of Dream's hand in the process, which fell limp. He shook Dream.

"Dream. Get up." George said. Dream didn't respond. *There's no way he's asleep, right?*

George shook him harder, and there was finally a groan in response. *He grabbed my hand in his sleep?*

"I want an explanation from him next time." Block said. George nodded, pulling Dream to his feet,

and moved his arm around his shoulders, and put an arm around his waist. *Well, Dream's going to get a fun lecture.*

"Thanks, sir." George said, and started walking out, with Dream sleepily walking beside him.

"One more thing." Block said, and George turned back around. "If you aren't successful in stopping The Blade your way. We will have to do it the other way."

"The other way?" George asked, shifting his hold on Dream so they were both more comfortable.

"You give up your jewels." He said. George stared at him.

He had no energy left in him to talk with the mayor, so he just turned and left, letting the guards escort him and Dream out of the building.

"Ok, Dream. How are we going to do this, hm?" George asked, still holding up Dream as they walked down the street. "You need to get home and sleep off your hangover. But I can't know where you live and you can't stay with me." George said.

"I'm just gonna sleep here." Dream said, vaguely gesturing back to the mansion. George chuckled.

"You can't stay with the mayor. That's not going to be a good idea." He said.

Dream looked down at George, and then narrowed his eyes. Dream pulled away, staggering slightly.

"What?" George asked.

"I thought you don't care." Dream said harshly. George blinked at the sudden change in behaviour.

"Actually, I said I do care. I just said that we weren't really friends." George said carefully. Dream frowned.

"Why aren't we friends? I see you as a friend." Dream said, his speech still slurred.

"But how? You don't know anything about me. You can't be friends with someone you don't know."

"But I *do* know you." Dream said. George gave him a look. "You don't have to know *everything* about someone to be friends. Sure, we have secretssss, but I have secrets from my other friends too. They don't know half of me." Dream said, using gestures with his hands that were making him unbalanced.

Dream was right. George's real friends didn't know who half of him was either. GNotFound really was half of him, and he has to hide that from everyone. Also to mention the fact that he's gay. That already feels like hiding his true self.

"So if *I'm* not your friend, then neither is anyone else!" Dream said triumphantly, crossing his arms over his chest and a big grin on his face.

George looked away. The silence filled the space between them.

"You're right. You seem fine to get home yourself. Goodnight, Dream." George said, and started walking away. Dream's cockiness disappeared and his smile fell. He ran after George, and almost tripped into him, but caught himself.

"Wait, no, I messed it up. I didn't mean you have *no* friends, I mean you have more friends than you think. You have me too. Because you don't need to know someone a lot a lot to be friends! Right!" Dream said. George stared at him.

"Go to sleep, Dream." George said, and then ran off.

*None of my friends know me. They don't know I live a double life.*

*And how can you be friends with someone you don't know?*

## Chapter End Notes

My favourite chapter so far. I love drama hehe

# Flashback

## Chapter Summary

A flashback to a year ago, when George and Clay each get given their jewels and transform for the first time.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### ONE YEAR AGO

"George, don't forget to do your washing as well as your homework!" His mother said as he walked into the house. He groaned.

"Ok, Mom." He called back, jogging upstairs. He went to his room and threw his school bag on the floor by his desk, and then examined the room. There was clothes everywhere, it was like a bomb went off. Ever since he became a junior, his Mom insisted he do his own washing. Which he procrastinated a lot.

He had planned to go to see the newest horror film with Nick and Quackity that day, so his plan was to speed-run all his chores and then ask his Mom.

He piled up all the clothes on the ground and gathered them in his arms. He then carefully walked out of the room and down the stairs, attempting not to drop any socks or underwear. He couldn't quite see over the top of the pile, so was taking the stairs very carefully.

"Did you have a good day at school though?" His Mom suddenly asked, making him jump and almost trip, but he caught himself. He reached the bottom and saw her standing there.

"Yep. Also, me, Nick and Big Q wanna go see a movie today, can I go?" He asked. His Mom sighed. "Please? I'm doing my chores, and I won't be gone that long. Please, Mom?" He asked.

"I'm sorry, George. But it's too dangerous. There have been multiple news stories of people with superpowers who have been out of control. The numbers are increasing, and the police have been having trouble containing it." His Mom said. George deflated slightly.

"The numbers are increasing? How many supervillains have there been this past month?" George asked.

"Two, George. Last month there was one. And the last one was fought just a few days ago. The army is trying their best but they have to use way more resources against someone with superpowers." She said.

"But what's the chance a villain attacks the cinema? Please, Mom."

"We have no idea who these people are and what they want. People have gotten hurt George, seriously hurt. You know the new mayor's rules. There's a curfew of 6pm, for starters." She said.

"I hate this new mayor. Why did he have to go making these rules just as I start junior year!" George yelled, frustrated.

"He's doing what's best for the city. He has a son, you know, your age. He might even go to the same high school, but he's new, you might not have met him yet." She said. George scoffed.

"Whatever, I'm sure his son is just as much of a prick as he is. I've seen Mayor Block on TV, he's an idiot. I hope I never meet his son or him." George said. Lorna raised an eyebrow.

"No cinema, I'm sorry. Not until all this supervillain nonsense is resolved. Not until I feel safe letting you out." She said. George let out a strained sound of annoyance, and stormed past his mother to the laundry room.

Meanwhile, at the mayor's mansion, Clay and his sister were playing a game of chess at the dining table. It was their scheduled activity together, and they despised it.

"I hate being in the same room as you for this long." Clay whispered, so Tracy, the assistant wouldn't hear. Drista stuck out her tongue, moving her bishop.

"Well I hate being this close to you, you smell awful." She retorted.

Neither would admit that they actually do enjoy each other's company. Just not when it's scheduled into their day.

"Checkmate." Drista said. Clay looked down at the board, shock on his face. Drista stood up with a sigh and stretched her arms. "All in a days work." She said.

"Wait, what? How did you do that? You cheated." Clay said. Drista scoffed.

"No I didn't. You just suck." She said.

"I do not. I'm the best chess player."

"Well, clearly not."

"You cheated."

"Did not."

"Did too."

"Both of you, settle." Tracy said. Drista left the room and Clay packed up the game, returning the pieces to their normal spaces.

"Is my father free?" Clay asked. Tracy checked her notebook.

"Unlikely." She said.

"Can I go see?" He asked. Tracy thought about it, and then nodded. Clay left and walked through the house, up a few flights of stairs. He lived in a nice place, a mansion, but he hates how quiet and echoey it is. And how cold.

He found his father's office, where an employee stood guard. Clay blinked at him, unsure of what to say.

"Can I please see my father?" He asked. The bodyguard nodded and stepped to the side, opening

the door for Clay.

Clay went in and saw the mayor along with a few other people. They were all typing but his dad was reading something on his desk. He didn't even look up when Clay entered.

"Father?" Clay asked, and the mayor looked up. Although he had only just become mayor, before they moved to the city, Clay's father was a very important business man. Rich, powerful, and cold. Not much changed when he became mayor. He just had even less time for his kids.

Well, he has only been this rich and powerful in the last year. The past few years before that saw some financial trouble for the Block family. But David Block managed to gain their wealth again. Clay isn't sure how he managed it so quickly.

"Clay, what do you need? Go ask Tracy for it." Mayor Block said, dismissing his son with a wave.

"I just wanted to see you. Me and Drista started the new school yesterday, and it was ok. I made friends with a few people, I think they are nice. My math teacher was kind of scary though-"

"Clay, I don't have time to hear these stories. Can't you see I'm busy?" He said, gesturing to the room.

"Yeah, but I just wanted to see you." Clay said, slightly softer.

"Your sixteen. Why are you acting like a needy toddler." His father's harsh words made Clay look at the floor. He started twiddling his thumbs.

"Sorry. Will we see you at dinner?" Clay asked. Mayor Block sighed loudly and with an annoyed undertone.

"Probably not. You know about the supervillain stuff. I'm overwhelmed with work."

"When will I be able to go for soccer tryouts?"

"Not for a while. You are to come home from school immediately everyday until this issue is resolved and I can ensure you are protected." He said. Clay nodded, rocking on his feet.

"So, what sort of stuff do you have to do today?" Clay asked, trying to keep the conversation going.

"Now is not a great time. Go do your homework, Clay." His father stared at him. Clay nodded, turning and leaving the room.

He knows not to get on his father's bad side. He's scary when he yells. And when he throws things. And when those things hit Clay.

Clay tried not to let his disappointment show as he walked back to his room. His father is right though. He's 16, practically an adult, why does he need to chat with his dad. Clay shook his head. This is part of growing up.

He went to his desk and sat down, letting his head rest on the table. He thought he should probably start his homework. He couldn't get behind on his second day.

Clay lifted his head, and was about to open his laptop, when something caught his eye. Sitting by the window was a small box and a letter. Clay furrowed his eyebrows and got up and went over to it.

It was a small brown box, with an interesting pattern engraved in it. The letter beside it had his

name printed. *Clay Block*

He opened the box, and had to lean away from it. The sunlight immediately caught the jewel, reflecting straight into his eyes. The beautiful bright green was almost overwhelming. Clay leaned closer, examining the piece.

It was a ring.

Clay's first thought was that it was a gift. From his father. His excitement took over, and he put on the ring.

But his look of excitement was replaced by confusion. The green jewel had disappeared. He tilted his hand in confusion. He took the ring off again, and the emerald returned. Clay's eyes were wide with curiosity, as he put the ring back on again. *Is this some prank toy?*

Clay looked at the envelop, and reached for the letter, carefully pulling it out.

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George had put on his washing, and was mumbling the whole time in spite, all the way back up to his room. He closed the door a bit too harsh, but didn't care. He was annoyed at his Mom, at the mayor, at everything.

He picked up his bag that was on the floor and threw it back down again. He smiled. It felt good to let out some anger.

He picked up his pillow and whacked it against the wall, a small laugh escaping him. *Destructive therapy.*

It was also just fun throwing things around.

"Stupid shoes." He said, throwing his shoes conveniently into his closet. "Stupid wall." He said, kicking the wall.

"George what the hell?" Lexi said at his door. George turned to see his fourteen year old sister open it. "What are you doing?"

"Throwing things. Get out." He said. Lexi shrugged and then left, closing the door almost all the way. George growled and kicked it fully shut. He then turned back to his room, and grabbed a scrunched up ball of paper.

"Stupid homework." He said, throwing it at the window.

He didn't realise that the window was open, and the paper flew out. But he did notice the box sitting on the windowsill. George cocked his head and went towards it.

He traced his finger over the strange carving, before looking at the envelop beside it with his name on it.

*George Davidson*

*I hate beginning letters so intensely, but I need you to not show anyone this. Ever. It is extremely*

*important and if it falls into the wrong hands... well, your safety and the rest of the city's safety is at risk.*

*You don't know who I am, and unfortunately I can't tell you. It will jeopardise my safety and yours. As I'm sure you're aware, the city is not safe. There are supervillains coming from seemingly nowhere. And there is more than usual.*

*The police are useless. All they have is guns and, against these near-invulnerable supervillains, they do nothing. It's like throwing stones at a giant.*

*We have to fight fire with fire. The only way to beat supervillains, is with superheroes. This is going to be very confusing and maybe even frightening, but you need to listen, and you need to trust me.*

*This isn't a movie, humans are still humans. There is no genetically engineered people and there is no "radioactivity" going on. Behind every mask is a human, and behind every villain is the source of their power.*

*There are some extremely precious jewels in the world, the ones that hold these powers. And when worn, can bring great abilities to the owner.*

*George, I have given you the Sapphire. The jewel of Protection. Along with enhanced speed, strength, agility, flexibility, reflexes, and all that jazz, is your power - Shield. And also your weapon, a bow which appears when you snap your rubber band.*

*When you wear your pendant in which the jewel is embedded, and say the commanding words 'Mask on', you have access to these powers. You must use them for the greater good, and defeat these villains and protect the city. 'Mask off', to return to normal.*

*I know this may seem like a lot, but it's important. I chose you for this job. No one else can have the sapphire. It's up to you. You may be wondering, why you? Well, George Davidson, who else? I chose who I believe to be the most accurate representation of the Sapphire. And I chose who will serve it well.*

*You are going to be one of the superheroes this city needs. But you cannot tell anyone who you are, not even your family or friends. If people found out, they could take advantage of this fact, and use your weaknesses against you.*

*You cannot even tell the owner of the Emerald. Or you will become the other's weakness. You are partners, and it must remain like that.*

*When you are transformed, if you say the word "shield" a blue shield will surround you and whoever and whatever you will it to protect. It will not last for long. And you can only use it once. After that, you don't have as much time before you transform back. If your pendant flashes and buzzes twice- you have five minutes. If it's flashing and buzzing constantly, you have less than a minute. You cannot transform in front of anyone. No one can know your real identity.*

*To defeat the villains, you must take their power. The power that lies in the gems. Take their gem, you take their power.*

*I know this must be overwhelming for you. I bet you are even questioning if this is legitimate or not. But it is, and it's serious. I know I'm asking a lot of you, but I trust that you can take on this responsibility.*

*Good luck, George Davidson.*



George stared blankly at the paper, for several minutes. Reading and re-reading and trying to make sense of it all.

*This is bullshit right. It's a prank. This is Lexi's doing. Or his Mom's. The note is literally signed L. That could be Lorna or Lexi.*

George finally teared his eyes away from the paper, deciding it was ridiculous. But he then remembered the box. He looked at it, and cautiously picked it up.

*There's going to be a spider in here. Or paint. Or even glitter. If Lexi did this, it's a glitter bomb, for sure.*

But when he opened it, his jaw dropped. It was in fact a pendant, and it had the brightest sapphire George had ever seen. He was afraid to touch it. The deep blue was almost enchanting. It was his favourite colour, one of the few colours he could actually see.

He didn't want to fall for the prank, but he did want to put it on. So he very carefully took it out and pulled it over his head, it landing against his chest.

He turned to his mirror, and a perplexed expression formed on his face, when a blank white pendant was seen in the mirror. He looked down at his chest, and the sapphire was gone.

He took it off to get a better look, but it had returned. George's mouth was agape in shock, as he put it back over his neck.

He thought about the words in the letter.

"Mask on?" He said, and gasped when an unfamiliar sensation swept over him, the tingling beginning in his fingertips and toes and swarming across his body. He shut his eyes.

But when he opened them, he yelled and jumped backwards from the mirror, hitting his head against the wall behind him.

"George! Stop throwing stuff!" Lexi yelled. George freaked out and ran to the door, locking it instantly.

"Sorry!" He called out, turning back to the mirror, where a man in almost all blue stared back at him. The only part of him not blue was the white box on his chest with a brown, *no, that's definitely red*, outline. And his face.

He raised his hands to the huge goggles covering his eyes. He tried to take them off, but they wouldn't budge. He looked at his hands, which the soft material extended all the way to, his fingertips covered. He put his hands on his head, threading his fingers through his hair that was now almost completely jet black, styled slightly curlier and more ruffled than usual.

"Oh my God I'm ugly. And blue. I look like a smurf. With douchebag hair." He whispered in shock, staring at the mirror.

He shook his head. There's no way this is happening right now. He picked up the letter again, his

hands shaking slightly.

Rubber band? He looked at his wrist and took it off. In one hesitant movement, he snapped the band, and a bow materialised in his grasp instead, making him drop it in shock.

He picked it back up, trying to figure out how to make it a rubber band again. The wood was flexible, so he bent it hard, and it switch back to the band, which he returned to his wrist.

"There is no way this is happening right now." He said.

There was a knock at the door, and George instinctively dove to his bed.

"George?" His Mom tried opening the door, but it was locked.

"Uh, y-yeah?" He called out, trying to remember what to say to change back.

"I'm taking Lexi to swimming, I should be about an hour. Your Dad won't be home until after." She said.

"Ok. Bye Mom." He said quickly, and heard as her footsteps walked away. He sighed in relief, and waited for the car to drive away until he stood back up again.

He read the letter again and again. Still in shock.

"Enhanced speed." He muttered, and then stood up. He looked at the window, and narrowed his eyes. He wanted to test the extent of whatever this was.

"This is dumb. There's no way." He said, but then went to the window and opened it. He climbed out, and onto the roof. He's never snuck out of the house like this before.

George stood up and eyed the tree near his window. He could jump. But that would hurt and if he missed, he could potentially break something.

He sat down on the roof and carefully extended a leg towards a branch, slowly trying to move himself onto the tree safely.

He managed to get on the tree, and hugged the branch. But then he heard a snap, and a second later, the branch fell with him on it.

He immediately threw himself away from the branch as he fell, and landed on the ground with a somersault, ending up in a position with one knee on the ground.

George's eyes were wide as he processed what happened. He slowly stood up, eyeing the branch. *What the fuck. What the FUCK.*

"Enhanced reflexes." He muttered in shock, and then looked at the street. He went to the road, and shook his arms, preparing to run.

He started running, and was almost winded by the unexpected speed. He gasped and let out a laugh as he ran down the street.

"Holy shit." He said, turning a corner and yelled when a car also turned, about to hit him.

George jumped, and somersaulted over the car and it screeched and swerved in an attempt to not hit him. He landed on his feet, with his hands out to keep his balance.

His mouth was wide open, as he turned back around to see the man in the car look at him and then immediately drive away. George shrugged and began to run again, a grin on his face.

"I can jump higher." He said with a laugh. He wasn't even tired yet from running, but decided to stop running on the streets. He had already gotten closer to the busier parts of the city.

He looked at a restaurant on the street next to him, which had a convenient ladder leaning against it. Full of adrenaline, he grinned and ran to the ladder, quickly climbing it to the top of the building.

George let out a laugh as he ran along the roof, and jumped to the next building. The wind was hitting his face and making his grin wider. He's never felt this free in his life, bounding from building to building.

He reached the centre of the city, where there were lots of people. George smiled at the fact that none of them could tell who he was.

He could see some people looking up at him, and then he heard screams. People were pointing and yelling at him, and then running inside. George furrowed his eyebrows in confusion.

He continued walking along the building tops, watching in confusion and people ran. What was wrong?

He heard sirens in the distance, and quickly puts the dots together.

They thought he was a villain. He had the costume and mask for one, and he was standing ominously on top of a building. *What a genius.*

And so, George panicked. He started running back, jumping from building to building, thinking of what to do next.

He forgot how fast he was, because he ran far enough that he already lost the sirens. But he didn't stop running, the adrenaline inside making him feel invincible. Which he was - to an extent.

When he jumped from one high building to a lower one, he was not expecting a person to be there on its roof, and he yelled as he crashed straight into them, the pair tumbling along the rooftop to the edge.

George slipped off the edge of the roof, and let out a scream. But before he could plummet, someone grabbed his left arm with a tight grip.

*"I've got you."* They said.

George looked up, his feet dangling in the air, and was met with a smiley face mask. George gasped in surprise. The person brought their other hand down and grabbed George's other arm, pulling him up onto the rooftop with ease.

George stood up quickly, and the first thing he noticed, was the height difference. The man in front of him was way taller, and was head to toe in yellow. The smiley face mask covered almost the entirety of his face, besides his mouth, and the blonde hair that was defying gravity. George could see yellow eyes through the eye holes of the mask, but had enough knowledge to assume they were probably green.

"Who the hell are you?" George asked, about to square up. The man looks just like the villains he has seen on TV.

"And who the hell are you?" The man retorted, crossing his arms across his chest. George saw the ring on his hand, with a glistening jewel.

The man may look like a villain, but he hasn't done anything destructive, and actually saved George. But George most likely would have been fine anyways if he had fallen.

*You cannot even tell the owner of the Emerald. Or you will become the other's weakness. You are partners, and it must remain like that.*

"Emerald." George said, lowering his hands. "You're Emerald."

"What about it." The yellow man said, holding his ring protectively. George quickly made the realisation that he was most likely not yellow. In fact, he was probably green, like his jewel. Since George was in blue like his sapphire.

"I'm the Sapphire." George said, hoping that would help the man.

"Ok?"

"Did you get a letter?" George asked. The man nodded. "Did you read anything about me?" George asked, trying to coax the information out of him.

"To be honest, I skimmed it. After I read I would be a superhero and how to transform. Didn't really care for the rest." He chuckled. George scowled.

"You didn't read it? Seriously." George said, shaking his head.

"Why? Who are you?"

"You were given the Emerald, I was given the Sapphire. The letter said we are partners and have to work together to defeat villains." George explained, annoyed.

"Partners, huh." He eyed George.

"How much of the letter did you read?" George asked.

"Um. Well, I'm a super cool superhero. I have a bunch of enhanced abilities. Oh, and a superpower! Project!" Dream yelled.

Suddenly, in a shift of light and shadow, something appeared next to him. But when it became an exact replica of the green man, both George and him jumped away in shock. The copy stood there, a smile on his face.

"What the fuck?" George said. His partner went up to his creation and stared at it in awe.

"Woah. It looks just like me!" He said, and then poked it in the smiley face mask.

But just like that, it disappeared. And the guy stood back in confusion.

"Where did it go?" He said, and then proceeded to rub his hands together. "Project!" He said again, but nothing happened.

"You idiot. You only get to use your power once. Now you'll change back automatically soon." George said. The guy turned to face him.

"That's dumb. I didn't know, no one told me!" He said. George scoffed.

"The letter did! Oh my God, I can't believe I've been partnered with someone this careless and incompetent!" George said.

"That's rude. I can't believe I got partnered with someone who is as uptight and insufferable as you!" The guy said. George glared at him, unsure if he could even see it through the goggles. "Who even are you anyway?" The guy asked.

"I can't tell you who I am. It said that in the letter too." George replied.

"That's stupid. My name is-"

"No!" George yelled, covering his ears and then kicking the man in the shin. "I'm not doing this. Go home and read the letter. The police were chasing me because they thought I was a villain. Let's just go home and wait until we can show we aren't evil." George asked. The guy rolled his eyes, and George could see that.

"Whatever. Can't wait to be your partner *Sapphire*." He said, in an extremely sarcastic tone.

"Me too, *Emerald*."

## Chapter End Notes

A little bit of backstory. Next chapter will be present-day. And there will be another flashback chapter eventually :)

ALSO thank you guys so much for 1k hits! It's my first work on ao3 and I'm still getting used to it, but thank you! <3

Follow me on twitter if you want to be notified when I update @/LottiaraT

# One of my biggest secrets

## Chapter Summary

Clay is full of regrets after what he said last night while drunk. George learns what the *real* key to friendship is

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### PRESENT DAY

"George!" Someone called, and George closed his locker and turned around. Wilbur was approaching him, which surprised George slightly. He wasn't sure what there was to talk about.

"Hey, Wilbur. How was the rest of the party? Sorry I had to go."

"That's fine, it was ok. But we couldn't find Clay. He disappeared around the same time you did. I was going to text you but realised I didn't have your number. And Clay hasn't been replying to my messages since yesterday." Wilbur said. George's eyes went wide.

"So he didn't stay at yours?" He asked. Wilbur shook his head. "W-where did he go? Is he ok? What if something happened?" George began to panic.

"I'm sure he's fine, I was wondering if you've seen him. But I'm guessing you haven't." Wilbur said, running a hand through his hair. George put his hands on his face, rubbing his temples.

"Oh God. What if he's lying in a gutter somewhere. I was with him last, I should have made sure-"

"Clay!" Wilbur shouted, looking over George's shoulder. George spun around and saw an exhausted boy walking towards them. He looked up and George noticed dark bags under his eyes. They both jogged over to him, and Wilbur put both his hands on Clay's shoulders.

"What happened last night? Are you ok?" He asked. Clay nodded.

"I'm fine. I got home." He said simply. Wilbur sighed in relief, letting go of his shoulders. George sighed as well.

"Next time please text me or something. I was worried." Wilbur said. Clay looked up at him.

"Sorry, Wilbur. I wasn't thinking." He said quietly. George noted that Clay looked even worse than yesterday. Still down and tired and out of it.

"Are, um, are you feeling better? Than last night, I mean. Cause you were a bit um, upset." George asked hesitantly. Clay looked up at him, and as if he was remembering for the first time, he cringed.

"Oh, shoot. George, I'm so sorry about last night. I told you some stuff I should have kept to

myself." He said. George shook his head.

"No, no. It's fine! I'm glad you let it out, seemed like it's been bothering you. And you shouldn't keep things bottled up. Otherwise you'll explode! Yeah. Um. Yeah, no, it's fine. No worries. No problemo. It's all goood." George said, putting his thumbs up, and then turning away to wince at himself.

"Ok, that's good." Clay said, and then separated himself and walked away to his locker. Wilbur and George watched him for a moment.

"Is he just hungover or he still upset about something?" Wilbur asked.

"I don't know, I've never been hungover." George replied. Wilbur looked down at him.

"Never? Damn, respect man." Wilbur said, patting him on the shoulder before walking away.

George had gym first up, so he was already in his gym clothes. The thing was, he had no clue where Nick was, and Clay was also in his class.

But George clearly cannot function by himself with Clay. The past few times have just ended horribly. George looked at Clay, who had stopped putting things into his bag, and was just instead staring into his locker, a blank expression on his face. George furrowed his eyebrows.

Taking a deep breath, and questioning every footstep he took, George approached Clay again.

"Hey." He said softly, trying not to scare Clay, who was in trance, but his voice cracked from nerves. Clay snapped out of it, and turned to George.

"We, er, have gym together. Right?" George asked, swallowing hard. Clay nodded, then shut his locker and swung his bag over his shoulder.

The pair began to walk in silence to the gym. George was feeling very awkward, but Clay wasn't even thinking about George. His mind was off in another world.

"How are you?" George asked, then silently facepalmed. What a stupid question. Clay glanced at him.

"I'm ok. Just tired." He said, fiddling with the strap on his bag. George nodded. "If you're wondering about what I said last night, I'm sorry I told you. I didn't need to burden you with my issues." Clay said.

"No, it's fine. I said it's ok. I- I hope things get better. And that um, whoever she is may eventually return the feelings." George said, scratching the back of his neck at the awkwardness he was feeling.

"Oh... yeah. I hope she does too." Clay said slowly.

"Who is it? If you don't mind me asking." George asked, curiosity getting the better of him. He wanted someone to hate.

"Oh. Well, um..."

"Clay!" A voice interrupted, and George was pushed slightly to the side and a girl came literally out of no where and flung her arms around Clay, who was shocked, but slowly hugged her back.

"Violet?" He said, and the girl pulled away. She had long brown hair, big chocolate brown eyes

and some light freckles on her cheekbones. She was around George's height, and had a really pretty smile.

"I feel like I haven't seen you in ages!" She said. Clay smiled nervously, moving her hands off his shoulders.

"Sorry, Vi, I have to get to class." He said, shifting closer to George. The girl pouted.

"Fine, but I want to talk to you. Can we catch up at lunch?" She asked.

"I have a bio assignment." Clay said.

"After school?"

"My father wants me home after school." Clay said.

George looked between the two. He knew who Violet was. She was Clay's ex-girlfriend. When Clay first came to the school, he had almost all the girls over him. After a month, him and Violet started dating. But it only lasted a month. Then they broke up, claiming to still be friends. Clay hasn't dated anyone since then. George just assumed he was preoccupied with schoolwork. But now he suspects that Clay's been crushing on someone for some time now. That's the only explanation for why he was so upset yesterday. It's a long-term crush.

"Text me when you're free." Violet said, giving him a kiss on the cheek before walking off with her friends. Clay turned back to George, looking embarrassed, before they started walking again.

George didn't want to ask the question again.

The rest of the short walk was in complete silence. Well, it was, until Nick suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

"Gogy! Clay!" He said, putting an arm around both their shoulders as they entered the gymnasium.

"How much did you drink last night?" George asked him.

"Oh I was fucked."

"And you're not hungover?" George asked.

"Oh, I certainly am."

Basketball. George hated the sport. They have been playing it the past few weeks. To be fair, George used to be absolutely atrocious at sports. But since he became GNotFound, you could say he's a bit better. Of course, when he's transformed, his speed and strength and agility is heightened. But all that exercise still influences his normal self. He's not as unfit anymore, and his coordination is much better.

But he still hates the sport. He was on the blue team, with Nick. Clay was on the other team. There were five people a side on the court, with one sub. There was another game on the other court with the other half of the class.

George wasn't really paying attention to the game. Him and Nick were talking to the side, only reacting when the play came near them.

"I love gym class." Nick said.



"What? Why?" George asked.

"Cause I do nothing and get to look at girls." Nick said, gesturing the girls on the other game. George rolled his eyes.

"You're too straight for your own good."

"And you're too gay. Hm?" Nick replied, poking him in the arm. George scoffed.

"I don't oggle every guy I see."

"You're right. Only one *particular* guy." Nick said, gesturing with his eyebrows towards Clay. George glanced at the blonde boy on the court. He still seemed out of it, not really engaging in the game. He was in defence this time, barely moving, even when the play came towards him.

But George quickly snapped out of his gaze when a ball was thrown straight at his face.

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"George, I really am sorry."

"It's fine." George said, his voice all nasally due to the cloth being pressed against his nose to stop the blood as they walked through the corridors.

"I wasn't paying attention where I was throwing it-"

"Xavier, I said it's ok. I wasn't paying attention either." George said. Xavier let a breath out of his mouth, while running a hand through his blonde hair.

"We gotta go to english." Nick said, pulling on George's sleeve. George gave a small wave to Xavier who apologised again before turning and going the other way.

Nick began to laugh.

"What." George demanded.

"I can't believe you got a bloody nose from gym." Nick laughed.

"It's not funny. It's your fault, I was distracted." George huffed.

"Well now you have blood on your shirt." Nick laughed, pointing at George's chest. George looked down, but Nick flicked his finger up in George's face.

"Fuck you!" George said, kicking Nick in the shin, making Nick groan in pain.

"Why do you always attack my shins." Nick said.

"Easiest access." George responded, as they reached their english class.

"Gogy! Nick!" They turned to see Quackity, Darryl and Skeppy sitting down in the back row as usual, so the duo went over to their respected seats.

"What the fuck happened to you, George." Quackity said, laughing and pointing at George's face.

"Language, Quackity. George, what on earth happened to your nose." Darryl said. George rolled his eyes.

"Xavier Miller threw the ball at George's face in basketball." Nick chuckled.

"On purpose?" Skeppy asked.

"Xavier the school photographer kid?" Quackity asked.

"It was an accident. I was talking with Nick. And yeah, he's one of the school photographers I think." George said.

"How did he manage to aim for your face?" Darryl asked.

"I don't know, he doesn't seem like the best at sports either." George shrugged, pulling away the cloth to see if his nose was still flowing. He cringed at the blood. It was still going, so he put it back against his nose.

"I hate blood." George muttered.

"Don't go fainting on us now Gogy." Nick said.

"I don't faint. It just makes me feel sick." George said. Well, most of the time. For some reason when he was GNotFound, it was like it switched off.

"Maybe Xavier aimed for your face because you're too beautiful and someone needed to ruin it." Quackity said.

"That's definitely it." George agreed.

"Bullshit." Nick said.

"Ahh! Language!" Darryl yelled.

"Maybe he hit you in the face to draw your attention." Skeppy smirked. George scoffed.

"Actually that could be it. Maybe he has a crush on you, George." Darryl said.

"He does not, we've barely spoken. And he hit me in the face. Chill out." George shut down the theory pretty quick.

"Damn, George pulling all the boys." Quackity said with a teasing voice.

"I wonder if he's this impressive to all the girls too." Nick said, nudging George with a sarcastic smile. George kicked him back.

"He must be. Look at George, he has pretty privilege. He could get any girl he wanted if he actually showed any interest in dating." Skeppy said. George nervously bounced his leg up and down.

"Or boy." Darryl added nonchalantly.

"Now that I think of it... George, you've never once told us someone you've had a crush on. Not a single one. Surely there's been at least one girl in the past year you've somewhat liked." Quackity said.

"Yeah, surely. Tell us, George. Maybe Felicity? You guys were friends for a bit there? What about Chloe, I swear she had a crush on you." Skeppy asked. George shook his head, readjusting the cloth on his nose multiple times.

"Maybe Gogy just hasn't had a crush recently." Nick said, trying to stop the conversation that was obviously making George uncomfortable.

"There's no way. Come on, George. Just tell us at least one girl you've had a crush on. I remember you were partnered with Niki that one time in art. Not even anything there?" Quackity asked.

"I'm gay."

He said it. He said the words he's been dying to say since he knew. The words that he has been both terrified of for years, and also proud of. It took years of convincing that this was who he was, and even more to realise it was ok.

George held his breath, waiting for the reactions. He had closed his eyes, for fear of... nothing. Because these was his friends, his best friends. Did he really think they would react badly?

The first thing he felt was a hug, and realised it was Darryl when he opened his eyes. He was hugging him tightly, and George slowly hugged back.

"Congrats, muffin." He said, and those words made George tear up.

"You're gay? That's epic, George." Skeppy said, thumping George on the back.

George laughed slightly, wiping a tear. He then looked at Quackity expectantly, who was grinning so big. He got up and also gave George a hug.

"That's awesome, George. Im sorry about what I said, I didn't know and I just assumed..."

"It's fine, Quackity. I never corrected you guys so it's not your fault." George said, as Quackity pulled away.

George let out the breath of air he was holding, and let another tear out at the same time. It felt like he had been holding that in for quite some time. It was like he was hiding half of himself.

*"You can't be friends with someone you don't know."*

*"Well if I'm not your friend, then neither is anyone else!"*

It wasn't everything, but it was enough.

Those three all turned to look at Nick.

"Oh, I already knew." Nick said, patting George on the head.

"Really? How long?" Darryl asked.

They proceeded to ask George a few more questions, like how long he's known, when he came out to Nick, who else knows, but thankfully, not who his crush is.

They took it really well, and it filled George with confidence.  
But not too much confidence.

"If it's ok, I'd rather keep this on the down-low for a bit. You guys are my best friends but I don't want other people knowing until... until I tell my family." George decided, taking a shaky breath. His friends all nodded, understanding.

This school wasn't the most accepting one. George couldn't think of a single person who was part of the LGBTQIA+ community publicly. For some reason there was a massive stigma around it.

George went through that class feeling lighter than usual, a small smile on his face as he took notes. His heart was still beating faster than usual from the nerves, but the relief he felt calmed him down.

At lunch, the group sat down in their usual spot in the cafeteria. And soon enough, the two sophomores joined them.

George didn't feel ready to tell Tommy and Tubbo. He had only just found out about their families, it felt unnecessary to tell them he was gay. Plus, coming out to his other friends was emotionally exhausting. He didn't think he could go through that again just yet. George needed time to get used to more people knowing.

George's thoughts turned to Dream. The man who knows nothing about George. But also knows one of his biggest secrets. The *only* person to know his biggest secret.

His friendship with Quackity, Skeppy and Darryl hadn't changed when he came out to them. There was no difference in their conversations or jokes or feelings. Their friendship was the same as it was before he told them.

He was friends with them even before he told them one of his biggest secrets. He trusted them enough to tell them.

*So, maybe you don't have to know everything about a person to be their friend.*

•

About half way through lunch, George and Nick had to go do their biology trials for the day, but when they looked over at Clay's table, he wasn't there. This was the first time George hadn't been staring at the table all lunch, too busy wrapped up in his own thoughts to think about his crush.

"Maybe he's already there." Nick said, as the pair left the cafeteria and went to the classroom. But alas, Clay was missing.

"Wilbur, have you seen Clay?" Nick asked their classmate. Most of their bio class was here, since they all had the experiment.

"Haven't seen him since this morning with George." Wilbur said.

"We don't have time to find him. Let's just do the trials before lunch ends, because we have math next." George said, grabbing their lab coats and finding a free table to do the experiment.

Although it took them longer than the rest of the class, since it was just the two of them, they managed to finish their trials for Tuesday.

"That's a lot of yeast in one day holy crap." Nick said, looking at the data.

"Yeah, it grows quick. But it will reach a carrying capacity where it won't grow more, and then they will start to die." George said, as they packed up their table. The bell rang to signal the start of their next class.

"Why?" Nick asked.

"Because, there's only so much food to go around, so-" But George was cut off due to a dinging sound. This sound always sets something off in George, making his heart beat faster as he instinctively reaches for his phone.

## **ALERT**

### **GNotFound requested by Dream at Mayor's office**

"Why do these messages go to everyone? Like I get that they don't know who Dream and GNotFound are, but surely there's a better way to contact them rather than texting the entire city." Nick said, putting his phone away.

George's grip tightened on his phone. *What the fuck does Dream want.*

Nick and George walked to their math class in mostly silence. George was going through his list of excuses. He's used them all too much.

"Oh, shoot. I think I put the yeast away incorrectly." George said.

"So?" Nick asked.

"So, it could disrupt the data. You go to math, I'll go fix it." George said, turning to leave.

"I'll come too." Nick said.

"No, it's fine, it's a one person job."

"But I don't want to go to math."

"Well... someone has to tell Ms Arley where we are." George said. Nick nodded.

"You're right, I'll text Darryl to let her know." Nick said, pulling out his phone. George huffed, and stopped him.

"You go tell her where I am. I won't be long. You don't even know how to store the yeast properly." George said.

"You can't leave me alone in math again. I swear you do it at least once a week." Nick complained.

"Sorry?" George said. Nick rolled his eyes.

"Whatever. Have fun with the yeast." Nick said.

"I... will?" George said, as Nick turned and walked away.

He sighed in relief and walked towards the back of the school instead, leaving through the back entrance. He whistled casually as he left the grounds, walking down the road, and eventually finding an alleyway. He checked the street before ducking into it, dropping his school bag in the process.

"Mask on." He said, standing up straight, and let himself transform. Once he had, he walked back out of the alley, jogging down the road.

He was wondering what Dream could possibly want. Since they couldn't contact each other, the only way is through an alert. Nick was right, they were annoying. But there was no other way.

What was so important that Dream organised a message sent to the whole city just to meet him?

Maybe it was something about Blade? Maybe he's figured out who the Liberator is.

When George made it to the mayor's mansion, and was escorted to the office, he could hear the yelling from outside.

When he entered the room, he saw the Mayor standing up, a finger pointed at Dream, who was sitting down, looking at his feet, and messing around with his fingers.

"It was completely irresponsible and unprofessional! How *dare* you enter this office while under the influence. You were on duty and had been drinking! If it was any other job, you would be fired. And I would in an instant. If it were up to me, I would get you to hand over your powers to someone else!" Mayor Block practically screamed, his loud and deep voice echoing through the room.

George stood there for a moment, feeling extremely bad for Dream who was surprisingly quiet, just taking the verbal abuse with no comments or rebuttal. It was the tamest and quietest George had ever seen Dream.

"I'm sure anybody could be a better Dream than you! I could give it to a five year old, and they could probably handle the job better and more professionally than you! Maybe they'd even figure out how to defeat the Blade. You're useless, and immature, and awful at your job!" The mayor threw the pencil he was holding at the wall to his right in anger.

"Hey, hey, hey." George said, stepping forward with his hands out. The mayor turned to George but Dream stayed staring at his feet. "Don't say things like that. He's not useless, and he's excellent at his job." George said, defending his partner.

Sure, they might be in a bit of a tough spot at the moment, but they were still partners, and George was slightly disturbed at how easily Dream was taking the yelling. And he didn't even flinch when the mayor threw the pencil.

Dream glanced up at George, but his expression was hidden by the mask.

"I see you aren't disagreeing on how *immature* he is." The mayor said, his face still red with anger.

"That's true, I'm not. At times Dream can be a little childish, but when necessary, he buckles down and does his job. Everyone makes mistakes, even superheroes. Even yourself." George said.

"That doesn't excuse the fact that he was drinking on the job! And had the audacity to rock up here under the influence and talk back to me!"

"I know, and I'm sure Dream regrets the decisions that led to that point. But-"

"Why is it always you who is speaking for the both of you. Dream has a voice, does he not? I want to hear him say that he's sorry and that he won't do it again. I want him to explain himself." The mayor and George both turned to Dream who slowly looked up.

"I'm sure Dream is very sorr-"

"I want to hear *him* say it." The mayor spat. They both looked at Dream expectantly.

Dream cleared his throat. "I'm sorry."

"For what?" The mayor said. George saw Dream's fists clench.

"For my actions last night. It was very irresponsible of me, I was on-call, and still chose to drink. Against my better judgement I let myself go for the night, not thinking about what would happen if there was a red alert. I apologise for my behaviour in this office, it was unprofessional." Dream said. George nodded at the Mayor.

"And?" The mayor said. Dream looked up.

"And.. I'm sorry for talking back?" He said. The mayor shook his head. "For... swearing?" the mayor shook his head again.

"He's apologised for everything, sir." George said. The mayor shook his head yet again.

"How about just earlier, when you rocked up at the mansion unannounced and demanded an alert be sent out to summon GNotFound. For no apparent emergency." The mayor said.

"I had a reason-"

"But you refuse to tell me what it is. You've wasted my time, my employees' time, and are abusing an important tool needed for emergencies only, disrupting the day of everyone in the city."

"I'm sure Dream had a valid reason-"

"I'm sor-." Dream said. George put a hand on his shoulder, stopping him.

"No, Dream. Don't be sorry for that. Mayor Block, you and the police force use the Red alerts excessively too. You can't chastise Dream for using it once." George said, yet again defending Dream.

Clay sat in the seat, his face red under the mask and guilt eroding his body. G has defended him time and time again, but not once has Clay ever defended his partner to his father.

He gives in every time, apologising and apologising, just wanting the arguments to end. Complying and agreeing with everything just to stop the yelling. But G didn't do that, G fought for what was right. G stood up to his Dad. G stood up *for* Dream.

"He has refused to tell me why. I demand to know the reason." Clay's father said, staring down at Clay, at Dream, not knowing it was his own son.

"We don't have to tell you everyth-" G said.

"Yes, you do. I am your superior."

"You never hired us."

"I own this city."

"You don't own us."

"Oh yes I do-"

"I wanted to apologise to GNotFound." Clay said softly, and the two of the most important people in his life turned to face him, both with confusion on their faces.

"It's been eating me up since last night. I needed to see you." Clay said, looking up into the goggles of G. The mysterious man who Clay was unconditionally in love with.

"You used the alert... to call GNotFound... to say *sorry*." The mayor said, his face somehow growing a deeper red than it already was with each word he spoke.

G was staring at Clay, but his eyes flickered back to the mayor.

"If you dare scold him for using the alert for the first time ever, to summon me, when you and the police do it often for sometimes even more mundane things, I swear to God, I will walk out of this office and never return." G said, pointing a finger in the air. The mayor's fists clenched.

"If you have the right to send a text to everyone in the city just to call us to your office to tell us we should go on a *news show*, then Dream can use it to call me to speak with me." G said.

And that was true, GNotFound and Dream were asked to go on a news show soon. Clay hated the idea of a camera in his face for that long, but G actually agreed to the idea, saying it was for a good cause, to let the city know that they will always be there to protect them, blah blah.

Clay sunk down in his chair. It was a stupid idea to use the alert. He knew it was. But he couldn't function, not when he knew G was upset. Maybe it was excessive, maybe it was unnecessary, but he had to do it.

"You are just as immature as he is, GNotFound. You are, if not more, incompetent. Everyday I think about how unfortunate it is that you are one of the people "protecting" this city. If it were up to me, you and your coworker would both-"

Clay immediately stood up, putting himself in front of G, facing the Mayor, and breathing heavily. Mayor Block raised an eyebrow at the sudden movement.

"Got something to add, Dream?" He asked. Clay stared at his father, every piece of fury and frustration rising to the top, threatening to spill. His fists were clenched with the words he so desperately wanted to scream at his father, he needed to scream them.

But he couldn't. It all got caught in his throat, his fear and conditioned response taking over.

The deafening silence filled the room, suffocating Clay as he was placed in this position between his crush and his father.

Mayor Block smirked.

"Cat got your tongue again? Can't even defend your partner, hm?" He said.

Clay felt a warm touch on his shoulder, slightly calming down his shaky hands.

G pulled Clay back, towards the door.

"I think it's best we leave." G said, standing between the two. The mayor didn't even respond, just sat down and stared at the superheroes as they left. Clay wasn't moving on his own, G had to guide him out.

They were silent as they were escorted out of the mansion, and it was killing Clay. His mind and heart was still racing from the confrontation. His breathing was quick and shallow and his hands were ridiculously shaky.

"Dream." G said softly, grabbing his shaky hands, trying to stop them. "It's ok. Why are you shaking?" He asked, when they reached the park near the mansion. The same park they were at last night.



"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, G. I couldn't say anything. I should have defended you, he was awful, I'm so sorry." Clay blurted out, pulling his hands away from G, who was about to say something, but Clay interrupted him again.

"And I'm sorry for calling you in the first place. I needed to see you, I needed to apologise. It was killing me. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't think. My mind was all messed up and my day has been horrible. All I could think about was how I said hurtful things to you, and that I damaged possibly the *only* real, meaningful relationship I have in my life. The only one where I feel like I can be myself but at the same time be someone completely different."

"Dream-"

"I'm sorry for what I said. I was drunk, but it was no excuse. I know how you view being a superhero. You see it as someone different, another life, and you can't blur the lines between the two, and I get it. We have to have secrets from each other, that's how this works. It makes sense. I know you view me as a partner, well, a coworker. And you're right, that's what this is. You do have friends, the ones who know your real name, and your hobbies, and get to *see* your eyes. I'm sorry if I stepped over any boundaries and I'm sorry if I insulted you in any way. I just really, really, can't lose this. This... partnership. Whatever this is." Clay said.

"Dream." G said slowly, testing to see if he was done ranting, and he was. Clay had said everything he had needed to say since last night.

"You aren't just a coworker to me. I'm sorry I said that and I'm sorry if I made you feel that way. I know we hardly know anything about each other. Except now your age which you stupidly told me. But I know I can trust you with my life. And there's not many people I could say that about. I've realised you don't have to know everything about someone to be their friend. I learnt that today actually. You just need trust. Trust that they'll be there for you." G said. Clay looked into G's goggles, trying so hard to find his eyes.

"You are my friend, Dream. I joke with you the same way I joke with my other friends. I trust you the same way I trust them. And I probably spend *more* time with you than I spend with them. I'm sorry too, Dream." G said.

"Even though I couldn't even defend you to the Mayor?" Clay asked quietly. G smiled kindly.

"I don't care about that. I could tell that was hard for you, and you still tried. Although I'm not sure why, since you have no issue talking back to police, or me, or literally anyone. But my guess is issue with authority or something like that." G shrugged.

"Issue with authority? Pfft, please." Clay said, crossing his arms over chest. G laughed.

"Of course not. The amazing Dream being intimidated by anyone?" G said.

"Never." Clay grinned, and they both laughed. The tension that was in the air earlier had dissipated.

"That being said, you really picked a bad time to call me." G said.

"Yeah, to be honest, me too." Clay said.

"Was that seriously the only reason you called?" Clay nodded. "Well in that case, may I ask *why* you were drunk last night? You know an alert could happen at anytime, and I'm sure being a superhero didn't just slip your mind." G said. Clay sighed, recalling the moments that led up to the party.

"I just, well, it hurt a bit when you said we were just coworkers." Clay shrugged.

"You really let yourself get drunk because you were *that* upset over it? Why do you care so much about what I think?" G asked. Clay bit his lip.

"Well, I don't know, like I said, this is one of the most important relationships in my life. You're the only person who understands how difficult living this life is. And it hurt a bit to think you didn't care about me the same way I care about you." Clay said, being very careful with his words. It was all true, of course, except missing one tiny detail. *And I think I'm in love with you and when you basically co-worker-zoned me, it hurt like a bitch because you somehow did worse than a friend-zone.*

"I said it last night too, I do care about you. And I've finally realised that I do see you as a friend. There are secrets I keep from my friends as my civilian self, and there are secrets I keep from you. But you're all still my friends." G said. Clay smiled, and fist-pumped the air.

"The friend-zone! One step closer to marriage." He said. G scoffed, and Clay could tell he rolled his eyes.

"Great. Dream's back." G said. Clay put an arm around G's shoulders.

"And you admitted you care about me." Clay teased. G tried to push him off, but failed.

"Whatever, it's not like I professed my love or something." G said.

"It will happen someday. Just you wait. Soon, you'll be begging to know who I am just so you can see how hot I really am." Clay said, an obnoxious grin on his face.

"You wish. I bet the mask that covers your face is a blessing for everyone." G said, tapping the smile. Clay playfully rolled his eyes.

"I bet if you saw me you'd think I'm attractive."

"Pfft. No way." G replied.

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"Dream, I really have to go." G said, and it made Clay realised he probably should get back to school too.

"Fine. Wait, can I please ask just one thing. Just one." Clay said, pulling away from G, whose mouth turned to a slight frown. *This might be a bad idea.*

"Dream... it better not be personal."

"You don't have to answer! I just thought I'd ask. Well... how old are you? Now, hear me out. One, you know my age. Two, it doesn't narrow anything down, there are so many people in this city. Three, only I would know. Four, I really just want to check that you aren't like in middle school, because you are really really small-"

"Dream! I am not in middle school, and I am not that short." G defended himself. There was a pause, and Clay had accepted that that was the best answer he was going to get from G.

"Seventeen." G said quietly, and then turned and sprinted away, leaving Clay with a big smile on his face.

He *already knew* G was the same age, or around that. He assumed that L would give the jewels to two people of the same age and maturity who could take on the responsibility. And also, he may be short, but G was obviously a teenager or young adult. His build, voice and knowledge all pointed to the idea that they were similar.

Clay just wanted G to *say* it. He wanted G to tell him *something personal*. Slowly but surely, Clay was going to get to know G.

Clay wasn't trying to find his identity, even though he was dying to know, but he just wanted to learn more about him. And wanted G to learn more about him. Even though they shouldn't, and the letter explicitly told them not to, Clay wanted this. He wanted to be close with G.

George had been questioning whether you could be friends with someone you barely know.

Meanwhile Clay was wondering why he was in love with someone he didn't even know the name of.

## Chapter End Notes

Happy pride month!

# What the hell is wrong with me

## Chapter Summary

George's parents find out about his school attendance. And Clay's father brings up the incompetence of the heroes at family dinner.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"It's not that hard, George." Nick sighed, as the fiftieth message in chat announced that GeorgeeeHD has died.

"It's not my fault! There's a stupid zombie where all my stuff is, and I don't know how to kill it!" George replied, spamming his mouse trying to attack the creature.

"Fine, where are you. I'll come help." Nick said. It was just them two playing on the realm. It was George's idea, saying he had to learn the game before he could play with Clay, since he had told him he's obsessed with the game.

George slammed his fist on the desk when he died yet again.

"This is a stupid fucking game for children and losers and it fucking hates me because I keep dying from this shit zombie and I am about to delete my entire life because everything in this world is awful!" George yelled into his microphone.

There was silence for a moment.

"Uh, hi guys." Clay said slowly. George's face immediately blushed bright red, as Nick burst into laughter.

"Welcome, Clay. George is throwing a tantrum because he keeps dying from this one zombie that is guarding his items." Nick explained. George sunk back into his chair. *Did he hear that. Oh my god.*

"That explains him yelling then." Clay laughed. "Are you guys on the realm?" He asked.

"Yeah." Nick said. "George, you there?" Nick asked.

"Did he rage-quit?" Clay chuckled.

"I-I'm here." George said, his voice cracking and he winced.

"I killed the zombie for you, and got your stuff. Are you at spawn?" Nick asked.

"Uh-huh." George said, walking around in circles.

***ClayBlock joined the game***

"By the way guys, I really need to apologise for today. The bio experiment completely ditched my mind, I forgot. And I wasn't feeling too well so I went home. I'm so sorry." Clay said.

"All good, Clay. George left me as well during math. Like I said he would." Nick said, his annoyed tone directed at George.

"I told you I got caught up with the yeast, and on my way back I saw some junior girl hurt herself so I helped her to the nurse." George said. He had figured out his lie while on his run back to the school. It didn't have many follow-up questions.

"George is a simp, confirmed." Nick said, making Clay laughed.

"Who was the girl?" Clay asked suggestively. *Well, apparently there are follow-up questions now.*

"Uh, I didn't get her name." George said quickly. Nick's character came over to him on the screen, and started dropping his stuff to him. George didn't have much, just the basic stone tools and leather armour. And some flowers he was collecting.

"Why not? You could have gotten her number or something." Clay said. George awkwardly laughed.

"She's a junior."

"That's only a year difference."

"That's not really a George-thing to do." Nick said.

"Why? You're single, right George?" Clay asked. George almost choked. Nick confirmed on his behalf. "Then if you aren't interested in anyone you should try finding someone." Clay said. George was lost for words, yet again.

George's silence must have confirmed something to Clay. "Wait, are you interested in someone?" He asked. George's eyes went wide. *Nick, help.*

"I- wh- no, no I'm not- no I don't-" George spluttered out. His crush asked him who he had a crush on.

"Oh my God, you definitely like someone. Who? Tell me. Does Nick know? Nick, who is it?" Clay asked.

"Uhhh, no he doesn't like anyone." Nick said.

"You're both lying. Come on, George. I won't tell anyone. Who is she?" Clay asked. George's panic was written on his face, thank god no one could see. "Fine, don't tell me who. Just at least tell me that you do like someone." Clay said.

"Maybe." George said quietly, running over to a flower field and trying to find some flowers he didn't have yet. It was hard, considering they were all similar colours to him.

"Yes! I knew it. Now I can use my amazing detective skills to figure out who it." Clay said, and his enthusiasm made George smile slightly.

"Seems like you're a bit happier than this morning and yesterday." George said, then facepalmed. Why did he say that?

"Oh, yeah. I sorted out some things, and I'm really happy now." Clay said, and George could hear his smile. Sorted out some things? That means he sorted things out...

"With... with that girl you liked?" George asked quietly, as Clay's character came jumping over to

him.

"Oh, yeah. With her. We talked and everything's fine. We are friends, and I'm glad. I still like them, but I'd rather have a friendship than nothing. Maybe things will change in the future." Clay said. George nodded, and dug a white flower.

"That's good." George said softly.

"Who is the girl?" Nick asked. George got a message notification from his phone and checked it.

## **Pandas**

Don't be too upset, George. I'll talk with you later if you want.

George didn't reply, he just left Nick on read. He needs to stop liking Clay, it's hopeless. It's not like George is ever going to do anything about his little crush. And Clay is too head-over-heels for whoever this girl is.

"Oh, no way. I'm not telling you until I hear who George's crush is. That's my deal." Clay said.

"What! George is too stubborn for that, we won't ever know who you like." Nick complained, making Clay laugh.

"What a shame. George, what are you doing?" Clay asked. George saw his minecraft character was beside him.

"Trying to find a... pink tulip, and a dandelion." George said, checking his list of minecraft flowers he had googled.

"Then why do you keep digging these white tulips. This whole place is literally just white tulips." Clay said. George sighed.

"I'm colourblind, so I have to read the item." George said, walking away to find more tulips.

"You're colourblind? Really? What colours can't you see?" Clay asked, his figure running beside George.

"I have protanopia. Red-green colourblindness. So the only colours I can see is blue, yellow or brown basically. I think pink to me is sort of.... grey? I don't know exactly what you would describe it as." George explained.

"Seriously? Woah, that's so plain." Clay said, and then his character stopped. George looked at his frozen character.

"Oo! Look what I have!" Clay said, and then threw a flower at George, who picked it up and hovered over the name. *Pink Tulip*.

A grin stretched across George's face.

"Thanks, Clay." George said, blushing deeply.

"No problem. I can't believe I didn't know you were colourblind." He said.

"I guess there's some stuff we don't know about each other." George said.

"Yeah, yeah I guess so."

"George!" He heard his Dad, and quickly muted himself of discord, turning around. His father came into the room, looking angry.

"Yeah?" George asked nervously.

"Downstairs now." He said. George nodded, turning back to discord.

"I have to go, I might be back." George said.

"Ok, bye George." Clay said.

"Text me later Gogy." Nick said, and George left the call, taking off his headset and going downstairs. His mom and dad were sitting at the dining table, and looked up as George nervously walked in the room.

"George. Care to explain this?" His mother asked, pushing a piece of paper towards him. George picked it up and looked at it. His eyes skimmed over it and then they went wide.

"We got a call from the principal and an email with your list of absences. Apparently over the past few months, no, almost the past year, your attendance has been appalling. Missing classes during the day, missing the start of school, sometimes ditching the entire day." His Dad said. George put the piece of paper down, his heart beating fast.

"On top of that, we've been informed that your grades are slipping, you were given a detention, and you have been falling asleep in class." His Mom said. George looked between them.

"Is there something you want to tell us George?" His Dad said. George's breathing was heavy as his parents stared him down. He looked at his feet, closing his eyes, trying to calm down.

"Has something been going on? Have we done something wrong? Please talk to us, George." His Mom said.

And then he broke. George let out a sob. And tears started to fall. In an instant, his mother was by his side, enveloping him into a hug.

"George? It's ok, it's ok." She said, getting him to sit down.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry." George said, covering his face.

"Why are you sorry, son? Please talk to us." His dad said, sitting down on the other side of him and putting a hand on his shoulder.

"I- I'm just so, so tired. All- all the time. I have so much I-I need to do but I can't do it all. I'm letting everyone down. I'm... I-I-I." George was crying as he spoke. His mother rubbed circles on his back.

"It's ok. You're ok, George. Right now, there's nothing you need to do. It's just us. Can you tell us what's going on?" Lorna said gently.

"I just- I can't do it all." George whispered, looking up at his parents with tears shining in his eyes.

*What the hell is wrong with me?*

•

"Dinner is ready." A voice came from the door. Clay turned around, putting his headphones around his neck.

"Can I just eat in here?" He asked.

"Your father is joining you and your sister." Tracy said. Clay's eyes went wide, and he quickly turned back to the screen.

"I gotta go, Nick. I'll see you tomorrow." He said.

"Ok, see you later Clay." Nick replied, and Clay hung up and quit the game, rushing to the door.

He was led down to the dining room, where his sister was already sitting. The table was unnecessarily big for a family of three.

Clay sat down next to Drista, who was looking at him.

"Thank God. I did not want to talk with him alone. How awkward would that be." She said, relaxing in her chair.

The doors on the other side of the room opened, and the Mayor walked in, sitting across from his children.

"Hi, father." Drista said, sitting back up straight.

"Drista, Clay." His father addressed them. Three waiters entered the room, carrying their meals and placed them down in front of each of them.

"How was your day?" Drista asked their dad. The Mayor scoffed, and picked up his cutlery to eat the steak.

"It was not good." He said bluntly.

"Oh, how come?" Clay asked, also beginning to eat.

"Was it to do with the red alert? I saw GNotFound and Dream had to come to your office." Drista asked. The mayor nodded.

"Yes. Dream was being an absolute idiot, wasting my time and everyone else's time to call GNotFound to apologise." He said.

"Apologise? What for?" Drista asked.

"I have no idea. It was idiotic. Both of them are complete jokes." He said. Clay just calmly ate his steak, focusing on chewing.

The family was silent for several minutes.

"Well, my day was ok. I had gym and we are doing gymnastics this term. It's kind of fun, but maybe because I can already do the splits so it's easy for me." Drista said.

The mayor hummed in response, not really seeming to care. Clay saw Drista looking at her father, hoping for more a response. But she sighed and went back to playing with her food.



"Since when can you do the splits?" Clay asked. Drista looked at him and smiled slightly.

"Since forever. I did gymnastics in elementary, remember?" She said.

"Aren't you still in elementary?" Clay teased, and she punched him in the shoulder.

"I go to the same school as you, dumbass." She said, but Clay saw a smile.

"Cut that out." Their father said, and both teenagers turned to him, going quiet and continuing eating their meals.

"What about you, Clay?" His father asked, his tone bored, like he was being forced to ask.

"Oh. Um, well, it started off pretty bad but was good at the end I guess." Clay said. The mayor scoffed.

"Really? Mine was the opposite. Started out great until GNotFound and Dream showed up." He said.

"But they are usually nice, right? They are superheroes and save the day and stuff." Drista asked.

"Sure, they fight the supervillains but at the end of the day they are both obnoxious and incompetent teenagers who think they are better than everyone else." The mayor said.

"But they seem so nice on TV, when they sometimes talk with reporters after fights." Drista said.

"It's an act. They just want fame. That Dream kid thinks he's entitled to everything, and barely does his job. He's immature and thinks everything is a joke. And don't even get me started on GNotFound." Mayor Block said. Clay looked away, his hand tightening on his cutlery.

"What's wrong with GNotFound?" Drista asked.

"That incompetent loser has the audacity to talk back at me. He's always talking on behalf of him and Dream, and thinks they run the place, that they are above normal civilians and think I am overworking them. That moron has no clue what he is doing, and-"

Clay dropped his cutlery, making a loud ding as it hit his plate. Drista and the Mayor both looked at him.

"Got something to add, Clay? What do you think about the heroes?" His father asked. Clay stared at him, his fists clenched and jaw tense.

"We don't really know the superheroes, so we just go along with what the TV is telling us. You telling us that they aren't actually good at their job is just a bit shocking. Isn't that right, Clay?" Drista said, kicking his foot.

"I want Clay to answer. Clay? What do you think about Dream and GNotFound?" He asked. Clay's breaths were quickening, sounding loud through his nose. He could hear his heartbeat in his ears. *He called G a moron. He called him incompetent. I can't let him keep doing this. I need to defend him. I need to stick up for G.*

But his words were yet again caught in his mouth. His father's stare freezing him in place and his fear of being yelled at stalling his anger.

"I'm going to assume you agree." His father said, leaning back in his chair, with an expression on his face which somewhat resembles a look of triumph.

Clay hadn't calmed down. His father's words from earlier and just now, ringing through his ears. The memory of G stepping in the *second* he heard Dream getting insulted. The memory of being frozen, just like this, between his father and his crush. Unable to do anything.

*What's wrong with me?*

"Can I be excused?" Clay managed to say, a small voice crack. He cleared his throat and relaxed his fists.

"Sure. I have to be excused too. I have to get back to work. I'll see you both tomorrow." Mayor Block said, wiping his mouth and standing up. His son and daughter were both fairly certain they wouldn't see him tomorrow.

Clay stood up as soon as he left, and speed-walked out of the dining room to the stairs.

"Clay." Drista called, but he didn't stop. He went to his room, and was about to close the door, but she blocked it with her foot, barging in, and running to his bed, jumping onto it.

"Drista, get out." Clay said through his teeth, gesturing to the door. She rolled over.

"Nah." She said. Clay almost growled. He just wanted to be alone.

"Are you ok?" She asked, sitting up in the bed. Clay walked over, his hands in his pockets.

"Get out." He said again.

"You seemed upset, I wanted to know that you're ok. Dad can get on my nerves too sometimes. But we both know he's wrong, so it doesn't matter, right? We just go along with what he says. But so long as we know what's the truth, then it shouldn't matter what he says." Drista said.

"Seriously, leave." Clay said again.

"You can't let father's exaggerations make you upset. He exaggerates a lot, and it's sometimes annoying to hear, but you have to remember that so long as you know the truth-"

"Drista! Get the fuck out of my room! I don't care!" Clay yelled, pointing at the door. Drista flinched slightly at the volume, then she slowly got up and walked to the door.

"You sound like him when you yell." She said, before leaving and closing the door... *almost* the entire way closed.

Clay let out another yell through his teeth, and stormed over to the door, grabbing the handle and slamming it completely shut. He then put his hands in his hair and started pacing, trying to even out his heavy breathing.

"I don't sound like him." Clay said to himself. "I do not sound like him."

Clay punched the wall in anger, then slid down to the floor, his hands over his face.

*What the hell is wrong with me?*

•

Clay found himself once again on the rooftops. He was running along, through the cool air. He felt like he was flying when he jumped from building to building. This feeling of freedom was the second best reason as to why he was so thankful he was chosen to have the Emerald.

When he was Dream, he had no worries, no concerns. He wasn't Clay, he was Dream. He wasn't the Mayor's son, who didn't have many close friends and had a fear of being yelled at. He was Dream, a superhero with powers and a purpose.

Dream had a purpose. Clay did not.

He had spent an hour running through the city, that he now had made it to some of the quieter parts. He knew the city well, having been on almost every rooftop. But the action was usually near the city centre, not the outskirts.

He usually spent his time running along tall buildings, and apartments. But he found himself jogging along simple houses, bounding from neighbour to neighbour.

It was late, and dark. The streetlights weren't as bright here, and there wasn't much traffic at this time. It was quiet, and dark, and cold.

So Clay wasn't expecting to see a person out at this time. Especially someone sitting on top of a roof, knees to their chest, staring up at the stars. Clay snuck closer, trying to figure out what this person was doing.

As he got closer, he realised he knew him. The boy sitting on this house was George. What was George doing?

Dream's curiosity got the better of him, and he made his way towards George's house, still jogging along the rooftops.

When he got to the house next to George, the boy who was previously in his own world saw him out of the corner of his eye, and immediately jumped away from the shadow on his neighbours roof, a loud gasp escaping from him.

"It's ok! It's me, Dream. Do you remember me?" He said, and George physically relaxed, putting a hand over his heart.

"Of course I remember you. You're Dream. But don't do that!" George said, taking a deep breath. Clay jumped onto George's roof.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." Clay said. George looked up at Dream, then his eyes widened.

"Wait. Is there a problem? A supervillain?" He asked quickly. Clay quickly shook his head.

"No, no. No problem. Don't worry." He assured George, who sighed in relief, but then tensed up again, cautiously looking at Clay.

"Then... then why are you... here." George asked carefully, fear of the response. His first thought was that Dream had figured it out. Dream somehow found out GNotFound was George Davidson.

"I just wanted to go for a walk. Needed to get out." Clay shrugged, and George let out the breath he had been holding.

"Mind if I sit with you?" Clay asked. George nodded, slightly confused. Clay sat down beside him, crossing his legs on the roof, and looking at the street.

"Um. Why are you here? Talking with me?" George asked.

"I saw you sitting on the roof, and I was wondering what you were doing. I realised I knew you, I

mean, remembered you. From when I saved you those few times." Clay said. George nodded.

"Right. Yeah. Those times." George said. Clay looked at the boy, who had his knees against his chest.

"So what are you doing out here then? On your roof, at this time." Clay asked. George sighed and looked up at the sky.

That was when Clay noticed that George's eyes looked slightly red, and puffy. His eyebrows furrowed in concern, his worried expression covered by his mask.

"Just wanted a place to think, I guess." George said, glancing back at Dream.

"You can tell me if you want. I know you don't know me but if you need someone to talk to you can tell me. I'm the perfect person to tell." Clay said with a kind smile. But his smile disappeared when he remembered that he actually did know George, and maybe that wasn't fair to him. Clay looked away.

"Why do you care?" George asked. And Clay turned back to look at him. George cringed at the harsh words he had used. "I mean like, you don't know me. You're a superhero. You have other things to do. Why would you want to hear my issues? Why are you sitting with me right now?" He asked.

"Well, I care about everyone. And you, seem to have a thing for danger, if I recall. So I care, George." Clay said.

"Oh. Well, thanks." George said. The truth was, he was considering talking to Dream. It was perfect, really. The masked figure didn't know who he was, and didn't know he was GNotFound. Even though George knew Dream, Dream knew nothing about him.

"Were you crying?" Dream asked, and George looked up with raised eyebrows. He rubbed his eyes, realising they must have given him away. George sighed.

"Maybe." He said, looking away from Dream. *How embarrassing.*

"It's ok to cry, you know. I cry too." Dream said, and it made George laugh.

"The famous Dream cries?" George asked. Dream smiled.

"That's right." He said, and George looked away again. "You don't have to tell me why. But you can if you want." Dream said. George bit his lip. Out of everyone he knows, this is the perfect person to talk to. Sure, it could be embarrassing for George, but it's only Dream. Dream has no one to tell, he doesn't know George in real life.

"It's stupid." George said.

"I doubt it."

"No, it is. I'm literally just... tired." George said with a laugh. "Just so, so tired. I feel like I am just... excuse the pun... but putting on a mask. Like a smiley face mask. Like a front, that everyone sees. I have to pretend that everything is going great, that I'm put together and everything is just fine. But it's exhausting. I have so much to do, and I just want to do nothing. But everyone is expecting things of me." George said, his voice wavering slightly at the end.

Clay was surprised, to say the least. He's never seen George like this, so open. He doesn't say much

to Clay, and sometimes he thinks he's avoiding him. Clay is sometimes under the impression that George doesn't like him. Making excuses to leave, sometimes not replying, or talking more with Nick in a conversation.

He knows they aren't extremely close yet, but Clay was hoping to make some more friends. He's quickly learnt that George is just a closed-off person. He doesn't talk about his issues much, at least not to Clay.

Seems like they have that in common.

But George had confided in Dream so quickly. Why would he tell someone he barely knows?

"If it helps, I don't expect anything of you right now. You don't have to pretend to be anyone. You can just be George." Clay said. George took a deep breath in and out.

"I get the whole mask thing. In fact, I get the whole facade thing too. I literally have two identities, so I am almost always pretending to be someone. Sometimes I don't know which one is the real me." Clay said. George nodded. If anyone would understand, it was him.

"So are you really just going for a walk?" George asked curiously. Clay sighed.

"Sort of. I just wanted to get out of my house for a bit. Needed a break from people." Dream said. George stared at him. *I forget Dream is a real person with a family.*

"Right, I get that. I needed a break from my parents. They saw my attendance record and were mad at me but then I broke down and now they think I'm some delicate kid." George said. Dream stared at him. "Sorry, that was too much. You didn't need to know that." George said, grimacing. *Why am I telling Dream, of all people, this.*

He's so used to not sharing anything with Dream. Why did he suddenly feel the need to? Most likely because he was George. Not GNotFound. And Dream was being so unusually nice.

He wasn't being his usual, annoying, obnoxious, slightly flirty self. He was calm and listening to George.

"That's ok. Why is your attendance bad? Are you a rebellious student?" Dream asked, with a small laugh.

"I've been missing class, a little bit. I'm not rebellious, in fact, I'm kind of a nerd. It's embarrassing. But I sometimes just can't be bothered. I'm burning out." George said, a half-lie.

"Everyone has their breaking point." Dream said, and George nodded.

They sat in silence for a while, looking at the sky. For George, this was definitely not the first time he's just sat with Dream. But it was his first as George. For Clay, this reminded him of his times with G on the rooftops.

*I wish I could be with G right now.*

"You said you were exhausted." Clay said, looking at George, who nodded. "Then what the hell are you doing awake? You should get some sleep." He said, standing up. George stood up too.

"Shouldn't you as well? Don't you fight supervillains everyday?" George retorted.

"Fine. I'll get some sleep if you do." Clay said.

"Ok, deal." George said, holding out his hand, knowing for a fact that his body wouldn't let him sleep even if he wanted. But he figured Dream deserved sleep.

"Deal." Dream said with a grin, shaking his hand.

#### Chapter End Notes

I feel kinda bad for them lol

# Double-booked

## Chapter Summary

George organised to meet with his friends, who are upset at him for not hanging out lately. But forgot he already had other plans for his alter-ego

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Ok, George. Remember what we spoke about last night." His Mom said, stopping him before he left the car.

"I know, Mom. I'll try to fix my attendance." George sighed.

"And if you're ever feeling overwhelmed, go see Dr Puffy at the guidance counselor's room, ok?" She said. George nodded.

"Love you." He said, hearing her say it back before he closed the door and went towards school.

He took in a deep breath. Today will be fine. There won't be anything he has to do other than school. Hopefully. He can try and fix his messed up attendance, and maybe fix his grades. Everything will be ok.

"Gogy!" He heard a voice, being greeted by an arm around his neck by a shorter boy.

"Hey Quackity." George said, as the pair walked into the school.

"Hey, you still on for tonight?" He asked. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"Tonight..."

"Don't tell me you forgot again." Quackity said, pulling away from George and giving him a look. George's guilty face was enough. "We are going bowling. The gang. Me, you, Nick, Darryl, Skeppy, and I think Darryl extended the invitation the two children." Quackity said.

"Oh, yeah." George recalled. He thought that was in a week, but apparently not. "Yeah, of course I'm coming." He said with a smile, and Quackity returned the grin.

"Good. Because you honestly need to improve, you suck ass at bowling." He said. George rolled his eyes.

"Language." A voice came out of nowhere.

"Do swear words summon you, Darryl?" Quackity sighed, as they were joined by Darryl and Skeppy.

The group was walking through the school, towards the lockers.

"I can't wait for tonight. I'm going to crush all of you." Skeppy said.

"No way. I'm the best." Nick said, popping out of nowhere.

"You're the second worst Nick." Quackity pointed out.

"Second worst?" George asked. They all looked at him. "Hey, I'm not that bad." He said.

"Sure, George." Darryl laughed.

"Ok, bowling isn't my strong suit. I'm the best at laser-tag though." George said. It was true, he was in fact the best in the group.

"Well you need to get better at bowling, George. For I am undefeated." Skeppy said, flexing. Skeppy had won the past few games they had played.

"I will beat you this time. The only reason you won last game was because I couldn't go." Quackity said. Skeppy scoffed.

"That didn't stop me from winning the games before that, hm? Maybe if you didn't miss that game, you would be better. Same with George. Maybe if you stop ditching our bowling days, you'd stop coming last Gogster." Skeppy said, and everyone agreed, turning on George.

"I'm sorry! I always accidentally schedule things at the same time that I forgot about. And get sick. And forget. It's not my fault I don't come sometimes." George said, trying to defend himself. If his friends knew what he was actually doing, they'd probably understand more.

"Well, make sure you remember tonight." Darryl said.

"George already forgot until I brought it up a few minutes ago." Quackity snitched. They all looked at George in disappointment.

"I'm sorry! But I'll be there, ok. I swear. Plus, Tommy and Tubbo are going right? There's no chance they are both better than me." George said. Everyone chuckled, like they knew George would still be the worst.

The bell rang, and everyone separated to go to their classes. George had computer science, his favourite elective. He didn't have any friends in this class, but he didn't really care. This was the one subject he actually cared about.

He sat near the back of the class though. He was less likely to have to engage in conversation with the teacher. He preferred to learn quietly and ask questions when he needed.

George sat down in front of the computer, booting it up and leaning back in his chair.

"Hey, George." Someone said, and he looked up to see Xavier Miller, the boy who knocked the basketball in George's face. He looked nervous.

"Hi, Xavier." George responded.

"I just wanted to see if you're ok? I hit your nose pretty bad. It wasn't broken right?" Xavier asked. George smiled kindly.

"No, it's completely fine. Don't stress about it, it was an accident." George said. Xavier let out a breath.

"That's good." He said, and then stood there for a moment. There was a beat of awkward silence. "Um, can I sit here?" Xavier then asked.



"Yeah, sure." George shrugged, and Xavier grinned and pulled out the chair beside George, sitting down.

He's known Xavier for years, they have been at the same schools since elementary. They haven't really spoken too much, just had a few classes together. Most people in this cohort were like that, everyone in their designated cliques.

Mr Parker walked in and everyone looked up.

"Alrightio, you can just continue on the projects you were working on with Arduino. By the end of the lesson, each of you need to give me a list of the things you need from our kits so you can start creating your projects." He said, and sat down, pulling out some food from his bag. Mr Parker was a very relaxed teacher. He's the kind of teacher that would get everyone to call him by his first name, if that was allowed at this school.

George pulled up his code, going immediately to the section that has been causing him some trouble. He's spent multiple lessons trying to fix it.

He was focused on the code, grateful that Xavier had stopped talking to him.

It was still creating an error every time he tested it, so George gave up and pulled out a piece of paper to write what he needs.

"Optocoupler? A temperature sensor? What are you making George?" Xavier asked, looking at what he was writing.

"I'm making a sort of hacking thing. If I get the remote for the fan, I can connect it to the arduino and with the code, should be able to turn the fan on and off depending on the temperature of the room. So once the room hits a certain temperature, the fan will turn on." George said. Xavier's eyebrows raised.

"Wow. That's impressive. I never would have thought of that." He said.

"What about you?" George asked.

"Oh, it's not as cool as yours. It's really simple too. It's a little instrument on the breadboard. There's three buttons and when you press the button, it makes a tone, but they are different tones. It's not that good though." Xavier said. George shrugged.

It was pretty simple, George has made something similar before.

"It'll be great. You can play hot cross buns." George smiled, and Xavier laughed.

"Yeah. I might add some more buttons, try to play twinkle twinkle little stars." Xavier said.

"That's a good idea."

"I'm not very good at computer science. I had to pick another elective, so I just chose it. I prefer music and photography." Xavier said. George looked at his bag to see the camera.

"You're one of the school photographers right?" George asked, and Xavier nodded.

"Yeah, I really enjoy it." He said.

"It doesn't matter if you aren't good at computer science, you're doing well enough, and you have other passions." George said, and Xavier smiled at him.

"Thanks, George." He said. George smiled back and got up and walked to the front, handing his piece of paper to Mr Parker.

"Ah! I'm very excited to see your project George. Just don't break the fan or fan remote." He said, raising an eyebrow at him.

"Of course not, sir." George replied.

•

"On guard!" Nick yelled, holding out his pencil. Clay brought his pencil up to his, their left arms up beside their head.

"Guys-" George tried to get their attention, but the two boys started fencing with their pencils, sword fighting during their biology class.

Clay was surprisingly good, and very quickly disarmed Nick, his pencil falling to the floor. Clay held his pencil up to Nick's neck, who put his hands up in defence.

"Do you yield?" Clay said dramatically. Nick fell to his knees, bringing his hands together in front of him.

"Yes! Please have mercy." He said.

"Guys!" George said, and the two turned to him.

"Can we finish these trials and *then* kill Nick?" He asked. Clay nodded, putting down the pencil.

"Good idea, kill him later." He said, cracking his knuckles. George laughed, maybe a little bit too much for a simple joke. But Clay didn't notice. Nick just raised his eyebrows at George.

George took a seat, he needed a break from looking through the microscope. He put his arms on the table and laid his head down, with a yawn.

Nick poked him.

George swatted at him, not lifting his head. Nick poked him again.

"Nick." George mumbled. He got poked once again.

"Nick, leave him alone. George is clearly tired." Clay said, and the prodding stopped. George looked up, shock on his face. He looked at Nick who was now spinning on a chair instead. Clay was peering into the microscope.

"How did you do that." George said in awe.

"Do what?" Clay asked, still squinting through the lens.

"Get him to stop." George said, looking at Nick who stuck his tongue out at him.

"I don't know." Clay shrugged, standing up straight.

"Why do you listen to Clay and not me! What the fuck, Pandas." George said, and it made Nick laugh like a maniac.

"Because I don't like you." Nick replied.

"I don't like you either!" George retorted.

"Ok, calm down guys." Clay laughed.

"No, George is an idiot."

"Nick is a loser."

"You suck at bowling."

"Well you're annoying."

"You're short."

"You're also short!"

"Well you always confiscate my pencil."

"Because you always poke me!"

"Well you always leave me alone in class!"

"Well-" George had no comeback. He did always leave Nick. This was part of his attendance issue. He's missed many classes, and this isn't the first time people have noticed.

"Ha! I win!" Nick cheered. George looked away. He was missing so much. He felt like he was only being half a student, half a son, half a friend. But he was also only be half a superhero. He was failing at everything.

"It's ok to miss class sometimes. Especially if you have a lot to do." Clay chimed in, looking concerned at George.

"But George doesn't hangout anymore either. Always ditching our hangouts." Nick said, leaning back in his chair.

"I know, I'm sorry." George said, looking at the floor. Nick grinned with triumph. He won the argument. Clay was looking at George, memories of what he told him -told Dream- coming to the front of his mind.

*George doesn't even tell Nick how overwhelmed he is.*

"Ok, class. That's it for today. Tomorrow is your last day of recording data then you can start your reports." The teacher said. Mr Peterson still hadn't returned.

George quickly got up and went to the microscope. He counted all the viable and non-viable cells from their last trial, quickly writing them down before helping pack up everything else.

"I have to go, I have a detention with Mrs Arley." Nick said.

"What for?" Clay asked.

"I didn't do my homework last week. Or the week before that. Or the week before that." Nick said, rolling his eyes, before he left George and Clay.

The pair walked out of the classroom, down the corridors in the direction of the front of the school.

"Hey, I know we haven't really been friends for that long, but if you need anything or want to talk to anyone, I'm here." Clay said. George looked at him.

"Oh. Th-thanks, Clay... but I'm fine." George said with smile.

"Ok. I don't know, you just seem really exhausted and if school is making you overwhelmed that you sometimes ditch, that's ok. I have to as well sometimes." Clay said. George looked away.

"Thanks, Clay. But really, everything is fine." George said. Clay frowned. Not everything was fine.

Suddenly Clay's phone started ringing. He pulled it out and looked at it.

"Sorry, I have to take this." Clay said. George nodded, and Clay answered the phone while they walked.

"Hi Tracy.... what? Why do I have to miss soccer?" Clay said. George looked at him. Eavesdropping was unavoidable if they were right next to each other.

"But I thought I didn't have to go to that? Why is..... father said I have to? But.... yeah..... yeah..... that doesn't make any sense..... do I seriously have to? I have a test tomorrow I have to study for..... i know, but..... can you please talk to him? I really, really can't go..... ok, thank you. Bye." Clay said, hanging up, and humming.

George felt awkward by the silence that followed as Clay pocketed his phone.

"Um, what was... what was that about?" George asked. Clay's grip tightened on his bag strap and he sighed.

"That was my Dad's assistant. Apparently I have to go to the event tonight. I normally don't have to go to these, but for some reason father is making me and my sister be there. Something about reputation and image. But I really don't want to go. I can't go. I actually can't." Clay said, biting his lip.

"What event?" George asked.

"It's been organised for weeks now, you haven't heard about it? It's a ceremony for Dream and GNotFound. Something about wanting to officially thank them for their service the past year. I don't know." Clay said.

George's eyes went wide.

"That's today?" He asked. Clay nodded. George's mouth was wide open. He completely forgot. How did he forget?

"Yeah, and father is making me be on stage with him. I can't though. I can't, I have... other things to do." Clay groaned.

George internally facepalmed. How could he forget a literal ceremony in his honour? *Nice one, George.*

Clay and George finally reached the front of the school. Both of their cars were out the front.

"I'll see you tomorrow." Clay said. George nodded. *Or today since you'll be at the ceremony with your father.*

"See you tomorrow, Clay." George said, and they both separated, going into their individual cars.

•

George checked the time of the ceremony. It started at 6, and it was now 5:15. Now he just needed an excuse to leave the house. He could sneak out, but it's too early. He could say he's going to Nick's house to study.

### **Pandas**

We are meeting at 5:30, by the way. In case you forgot. But I don't think you would forget since we spoke about it today.

George saw the message, and froze, looking up at the wall in front of him. He has totally fucked up.

George put his head in his hands. *Why is this so overly complicated.*

He has to tell Nick he can't go. He has to go to the ceremony. It's in his honour and the Mayor is already pissed off at him as it is. But he keeps ditching his friends. He can't keep avoiding them.

"George, how was school today?" His mother's voice interrupted his thoughts as she knocked and entered his room.

"It was alright." He said. She smiled.

"That's great."

"Hey, is it ok if I go bowling with my friends tonight? The whole group is going. I'll get dinner there." George said.

"Sure. Just don't be too late back ok." She said. He nodded.

"I know." He said.

"What time are you going bowling?" George checked the time again.

"In fifteen minutes."

"George! You could have told me sooner. Do you need a lift or do you want to take the car?" She asked.

"Could I get a lift?" He asked.

•

George arrived at the bowling right on time, already seeing everyone there. They all cheered when they saw him.

"George! You came!" Quackity said, pulling George to the seat.

"For a minute there I thought you were going to pussy out." Nick said.

"Language."

"Are you ready to see the incredible Tommy in action!" Tommy said, flexing his muscles. Tubbo rolled his eyes.

"He's not as good as he says he is."

"Tubbo, what the fuck." Tommy said.

"Language!"

"Hey, can we also watch that ceremony thing for the superheroes at 6? I wanna see it." Nick said.

"Oh yeah! For sure. It'll be interesting to see Dream and GNotFound when they aren't fighting a supervillain." Skeppy said.

"You alright George?" Nick said, looking at his friend. George nodded and sniffled.

"Yeah." He said, lying down on the bench, closing his eyes.

"Ok, let's start. Quackity, you're up first." Skeppy said, and Big Q stood up, swinging his arm and grabbing a ball.

He only knocked down 4 pins, followed by another 2.

"I must have misheard you earlier. I thought you said you were better than me." Skeppy said. Quackity flipped him off while Darryl got up to have his turn.

"Are you sure you're ok, George?" Tubbo asked. George opened his eyes, seeing Tubbo was sitting beside him.

"I'm really really tired, but I'm ok." He said.

"Why are you so tired?"

"Didn't sleep."

"Last night?"

"Or the night before. Or the night before that." He said, telling almost the entire truth.

"What the hell? George, how are you functioning." Tubbo said, as Darryl got a spare and made his way back.

"Why isn't he functioning?" Darryl asked.

"He hasn't slept in three days!" Tubbo said.

Well... George hasn't properly slept in months. But sure, only three days.

"Have you really not?" Nick asked. George shook his head, letting his eyes close again.

"I'm fine." He mumbled.

"Maybe you should go home and get some rest. You look like you need it. Look at those eye bags." Darryl said.

"No, no, I'm fine. I haven't hung out in a while, I feel bad." George said, sitting up and then standing up and grabbing a bowling ball. It was his turn.

He went up to the alley, and lined up a shot. He then took a step and let the ball go. It went down at a reasonable pace, but it went straight into the gutter.

George sighed and turned back around. Tommy and Quackity were laughing their heads off.

"George, you don't have to be here. We miss you, but if you're this exhausted we would rather you get some sleep." Darryl said.

"I'm fine, I'm fine." George waved off, taking the ball and going for his second shot. Which was also a gutter ball. He was bad at bowling, but not *this* bad.

He was going to sit back down, but Nick grabbed his hand and pulled him away.

"I didn't realise you haven't been sleeping. Why haven't you?" He asked.

"I don't have time to sleep." George said.

"What do you mean you don't have time?"

"I have so much to do. When do you think I catch up on my schoolwork Nick?" George said, and he was telling the truth. He's been trying to keep his grades up, but missing school and having almost no time to study is still impacting him.

"Go home, George. We can hang out another time. And don't you dare study. You better sleep." Nick said. George nodded.

"Ok. Thanks Nick. I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry."

"No, I really am sorry."

"There's nothing to be sorry about, it's not your fault." He said.

But it is. Sure, George was exhausted, he's always exhausted. But he exaggerated it more so he could get out of bowling. It wasn't too hard to do, since he was literally running on only an hour sleep from last night. But he needed something as an excuse.

The guilt was eating him up inside as he said goodbye to everyone, ensuring he will be ok to drive home in this state.

But George wasn't driving home. He didn't even drive here. He had somewhere else to be.

He didn't lie about how busy he was.

## Chapter End Notes

I split the chapter in half cause it was too long, I'll post the ceremony in a few days :)

# Medal of Valor

## Chapter Summary

George attends the ceremony in his honor... but Dream is nowhere to be found

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"GNotFound, where is Dream?" Some random man in a uniform said, walking over to George who had just arrived at the ceremony.

Right in the city centre was a massive, tall podium, and a piazza for people to gather. This was where the mayor did big announcements that he couldn't do from his office. And this was where the heroes ceremony was.

George arrived a few moments ago, going up onto the podium via the stairs at the back that had a crazy amount of security. The moment he was seen on the stage, the entire crowd noticed and applauded, and he gave them a small smile and wave, before some workers pulled him towards the back of the podium to debrief him.

George barely had enough time to register what was going on, before he was confronted by this guy who clearly looked like he was in charge of the event.

"I don't know, I just got here." George said calmly.

"Well, can you contact him?" The man asked. He looked stressed, and was tapping his foot.

George hadn't seen Dream anywhere. He just prayed that he had remembered the event and would show up.

"We don't know each other in real life, I can't just call him." George said, rolling his eyes. Thank god no one could see his attitude.

George looked behind the man, and saw the Block family standing to one side of the stage. The mayor was there, standing next to a young girl and boy. He instantly recognised Clay, and his sister Drista. Drista was smiling at George, but Clay was just staring.

The Mayor brushed down his blazer, before walking over to George.

"GNotFound." He said. George nodded.

"Good evening sir." He replied. It seemed like they were going to put their differences aside for the ceremony.

"I'd like for you to meet my children." The mayor said, gesturing for Clay and Drista to come over. Drista skipped over happily, and Clay followed.

"This is my daughter, Drista." He said, and Drista held out her hand to George.



"Hi GNotFound." She said excitably. George chuckled, shaking her hand.

"Hi, it's lovely to meet you." He said.

"Oh my gosh, I'm shaking hands with GNotFound." She said, making George laugh even more. But he saw her glance at her father, and her smile fell, letting go of George's hand and taking a small step back.

"And this is my son Clay." The mayor said. George and Clay looked at each other for a moment.

George cleared his throat and held out his hand, and Clay tore his eyes away from George's goggles, looking at his hand. He reached out and shook it.

"H-hi." Clay said.

"Hi." George smiled. This was bizarre. He was being introduced to his friend, his crush. And Clay had no clue that they knew each other.

"Where is Dream?" The Mayor asked, and George and Clay let go of each other's hands. George swallowed.

"I don't know, sir. I'm sure he will come soon though." George said. Clay ran another hand through his hair.

"Father, can I please-"

"No, Clay. I already told you this is important. I don't care if you have a test tomorrow, you should have studied already." Mayor Block said. Clay made a sound of frustration, a groan, and his hands turned to fists.

"Don't give me that attitude." The mayor warned, his tone deadly. Clay immediately nodded, taking a step back in line with Drista.

*I feel bad for them that this man is their father.* If George had it hard from the Mayor, he couldn't imagine the stress on his own kids.

George was offered a seat, which he took. Everyone on stage and off stage was just waiting. They were all waiting for Dream to show up.

Several minutes passed, George was growing increasingly nervous. Dream wasn't here yet, and a massive crowd was watching him.

"GNotFound, where the hell is Dream." The mayor said eventually, coming over to George and pulling him over where no one could hear.

"I don't know sir. The only way I can contact him is through the alerts." George said. The Mayor scoffed.

"This isn't important enough for an alert."

"I'm sure he knows about the event. It's on the news. My guess is he's either running late, or something has compromised him coming." George said calmly.

"Compromised? What's more important than a ceremony in his honour!" The mayor said. His attempt at whispering causing spit to fly out of his mouth.

"I don't know, sir. He may not be in a safe place to transform without people knowing. He might not be coming." George said, trying to keep his cool.

"This is outrageous!" The mayor said, his voice raised louder so that now everyone on stage could hear.

George saw Clay and Drista look over. Clay looked extremely worried, his eyebrows knitted and his leg bouncing.

"I've just about had it with the both of you! Thinking you can get away with all of this. You both think you're so much better than everyone else, and you think that you can just slack off. This is the real world, you don't get to slack off. This is your job. I've said it before and I'll say it again, if you are not fit for this job, you should both give your jewels to someone more competent." The mayor said, getting close to George's face.

George just stood there calmly, letting him yell at him. He didn't want a fight today.

He glanced over at the young Block's, and saw Clay had stood up, looking like he was about to walk over, but his sister grabbed his arm, stopping him, and making him sit back down again.

"I apologise for Dream's behaviour. I assure you we are the trying our best, we were chosen for this job and we sometimes make mistakes but we have more experience than anyone else. These ceremonies weren't... in our job description, to say the least. So you can't expect us to be here. Supervillains are more important." George said. The mayor was going more and more red.

"Sir, I think we should start the ceremony. GNotFound can accept Dream's award on his behalf." A woman said, interrupting them. The mayor stood up straight and nodded, walking over to some other workers. George sighed and sat down again.

As soon as the mayor walked away from George, Clay got up and ran over to George.

"G... NotFound. I'm so sorry about my father." Clay said, taking the empty seat next to George, the one meant for Dream.

"Don't be sorry, it's fine. You're father is great." George lied, giving Clay a kind smile. He wasn't about to tell him that his father is an asshole.

"No he's not. He can be mean and unfair. I'm sorry you took all of that yourself." Clay said.

"It's fine, Clay. It's not the first time." George said.

"It's not fine. You don't deserve-"

"Hello everyone, and good evening. Welcome to our first heroes ceremony, to celebrate the anniversary of our own two amazing superheroes arriving in this city and protecting us all." The Mayor started to speak, and everyone applauded. Clay quickly dashed back to his seat next to his sister.

"Unfortunately, Dream is unable to attend for undisclosed reasons. I'm sure he wishes he could be here. But we have our very own GNotFound, who will be accepting the award on his behalf." The mayor said, gesturing to George, who stood up on the stage and walked to the front.

"It was a year ago today where our two superheroes first defeated a villain. Before them, we had our police force and army trying to fight them. There was curfews, and people lived in fear. Until seemingly out of nowhere, Dream and GNotFound defeated a villain in less than an hour. And

they've been protecting the city every since." The mayor said with a large plastic smile. Everyone cheered once again.

"Today, I want to personally, and on behalf of the city, extend my gratitude towards the heroes, and present to them each, an award." The mayor said, and then turned from the microphone, looking at Clay and Drista.

Both his children stood up and walked over, both now holding a box.

"A Medal of Valor is awarded to those who have exhibited great courage and have ignored own personal safety for the protection of others. It is usually awarded to public safety officers, and is the highest declaration of bravery. But today, I want to give it to GNotFound and Dream, who save this city and it's people, time and time again." Mayor Block said, and Clay and Drista both opened their boxes. Inside each was a medal, a silver star with a coloured neck ribbon.

Drista's one had a blue ribbon, the same colour as George's suit, and Clay's had the same colour as Dream's.

"So on behalf of me, the people, and this city. I present this Medal of Valor, to GNotFound." The mayor said, turning to Drista's box and delicately pulling out the medal.

He walked over to George, who was smiling. He bowed his head slightly as the Mayor put it around his neck. When the Mayor stood back, the entire crowd erupted into applause, and the Mayor and George both shook hands.

"I can't imagine someone more deserving of this award." The Mayor said, his tone betraying him and his fake smile threatening. George just smiled back.

"Thank you, Mayor Block." George said.

The Mayor stepped back to the microphone, and the applause died down for a moment.

"I also present this award to Dream, who is not here, but GNotFound will get the medal to him." The mayor said, and took the box from Clay, giving it to George, as the audience applauded and cheered again.

George looked over at the two kids on stage. Drista was grinning and clapping as well. Clay was also clapping, but his jaw was tense. But when he saw George look his way, he put on a smile.

"Say a few words." The mayor whispered to George, who nodded and stood at the microphone, waiting for the applause to quieten down.

George used to be petrified of public speaking, until the past year where he grew in confidence. But this crowd still was a lot. Hundreds of faces were staring up at him. And even more behind the cameras.

"Uh, hi. First of all, I want to express my thanks to Mayor Block, who so generously gave me and Dream this award, I am in shock. It means a lot, so I want to thank him. I also want to apologise on behalf of my partner. Dream unfortunately couldn't make it today, but I assure you he would definitely want to be here, but living a double life can make it difficult to have opportunities to transform, and we like to save our excuses for more important events like villains." George said, looking out into the sea of people.

"I also wanted to say that even though I really, really appreciate this Medal, and am honoured to wear it, I wanted to say that myself and Dream don't do all this for the award, or the "fame", or the

glory. We do it because we really do care about this city and everyone in it. With great power comes great responsibility, and our number one job is protecting everyone. But thank you again, for this Medal." George said, and once again, a loud round of applause and cheers.

George stepped away from the mic, giving the crowd a wave and smile, allowing himself to be proud for once in this moment. Look at the impact he has had on this city.

A buzzing was heard. George noticed it before everyone else, his senses well trained for potential danger, and his face fell as he concentrated.

It grew louder, and closer, and everyone else noticed too, looking up and around. George looked out in the distance, and he could see something flying towards the podium and piazza.

George narrowed his eyes, as the figure grew closer. And a few moments later, George realised it was a person, a villain, dressed head to toe in brown, feet attached to some sort of flying machine.

"Everyone down!" George yelled into the mic. The crowd started yelling, confused, but all dispersing or ducking.

The person in all brown, as George noticed, zoomed closer, and then something large shot out of their hands and came straight for the stage. It was a massive ball of fire.

It hit the podium, just below where they stood, and made the whole thing shake on impact. George turned, seeing the Mayor already going down the stairs with his personnel.

The entire build was wobbling, smoke growing higher as the flames ate the wood.

George turned back to the villain, quickly pocketing Dream's medal, and then snapped his bow, aiming an arrow, which the villain dodged with ease.

The person just smirked, their mouth and nose visible, before aiming another fireball towards a nearby building, and then flying away, aiming more balls of fire to as many places as they could.

George ran to the edge of the stage, looking down. The crowd had run for cover. The jump was high, it could break someone's leg if they weren't a superhero. He prepared to jump.

"GNotFound!" He heard a girl's voice, and turned to see Clay and Drista still on the stage. The stairs at the back had collapsed, and for some reason, every employee had left the two children for last. Clay had an arm around his sister, looking around trying to find a solution. Drista was coughing, as the smoke grew thicker.

George ran over, keeping balance as the structure continued to shake.

"Your father left you?" George yelled over the chaos. Clay nodded, and then practically shoved Drista against George.

"Get her out of here." He said. George nodded. He picked Drista up, one arm around her back and the other under her knees. She was coughing a lot.

George ran to the edge, looking down.

"Don't you- dare drop me." She said between coughs, tightening her grip on George.

"I won't, I promise. Ready?" He said. She nodded and closed her eyes. George leapt off the podium, landing and immediately sprinting away from the crumbling structure, and to a building

that hadn't been fireballed. He gently put her on her feet at the entrance, and turned back to the stage.

Clay was there, looking at him. He was slightly hidden by the smoke. But George could see he was fiddling with his ring and coughing. George sprinted back. He needed to get Clay out, the entire stage was leaning as the flames licked the sides.

"You'll be ok! Just one second, Clay!" George called out. Clay nodded, not looking as scared as George would expect. More... indecisive.

George ran and jumped onto the side of a building next to the stage, climbing up the exposed bricks. Once he was high enough, he turned and prepared his jump to the stage, which he did with ease.

George ran to Clay, putting a hand on his shoulder. He looked mostly ok, but was coughing a lot.

There was a big jolt, and a chunk of the podium fell, landing where George jumped earlier with Drista. The wood was still alight on the ground. And the entire structure was leaning.

"Shit." George said. He looked around, trying to find the best way to get himself and Clay out of the crumbling stage and smoke without landing on burning wood.

Suddenly Clay collapsed, a coughing mess and George immediately picked him up, holding him tightly against him. Clay wrapped his arms around George's neck, trying to stop his coughing fit. He felt Clay bury his head into his shoulder, but George had to ignore the butterflies, as he focused on what to do.

"I've got you, Clay." George assured the boy who was clinging to him.

He ran back to the edge of the stage. He couldn't jump down, there was flaming wood below him, and the jump over it was too far.

There was a sudden loud snapping sound, and the podium began to cave in on itself.

"Hold tight." George said against his ear, and felt the boy's arms tighten. "Shield!" George yelled, and the blue sphere surrounded them both, just as the stage collapsed completely.

George and Clay fell too, but the shield protected them from the flames, the wood and the fall, landing on top of the destruction.

George ran with Clay still in his arms and the shield still protecting them from the fire. He ran back to the same building he had taken Drista.

The girl was standing outside, clearly wanting to run to her brother, but a civilian was stopping her from running towards the flames. But when George and Clay got close enough, and George dropped the shield, she ran the last few yards and grabbed Clay's arm.

"Clay!" She said with tears, as the three of them walked back to the building, which George noticed was a clothes store.

"I-I'm ok." Clay coughed with a smile. George gently placed him on his feet, keeping one arm around his waist, making sure he could stand.

"Both of you stay inside. Where did your father go?" George asked, as Drista hugged her brother.

"I don't know." Drista said, her voice muffled in the hug. Clay hugged her back, resting his chin on her head. George realised he still had an arm around Clay, and he quickly pulled away, clearing his throat.

Clay turned to him.

"Thank you G...NotFound. For saving Drista and I." He said, staring into George's goggles.

"Of course," George said, surprised at the lack of stuttering he has done today.

There was a loud explosion in the distance, and George snapped his head around.

"Sorry, I have to go." George said, giving the Block siblings a quick wave before sprinted away, snapping his bow in the process. "Where the fuck is that green smiley bastard." George then muttered to himself.

George ran to a building that had been hit with a fireball, running inside. No one seemed to be inside, but he ran up the stairs anyways to check.

He reached the top, and ran out onto the rooftop. In the distance, he could see the villain in brown, flying in the air and throwing fire. George tensed his jaw.

Not too many of the villains have extremely destructive powers, ones that can kill. This one however, this one can definitely hurt some people.

George ran along the rooftops, jumping across the gaps, trying to get closer to the villain.

He finally was close, trying to see the jewel, but the villain saw George, and aimed their hands. George dove out of the way, behind a tall chimney, catching his breath.

*Buzz Buzz*

George looked down at his chest, seeing the medal of valour, and also his pendant, which flashed twice. Shit.

Dream was no where to be found, and this dangerous villain was just parading the city. And George had only five minutes to do something about it.

George closed his eyes, racking his brain for ideas.

"Goggles." He heard Dream and snapped open his eyes. The smiley face was right in front of him. George glared at him.

"Where the hell have you been?" George said, as Dream sat beside him against the chimney wall.

"Busy. But I heard there was a ceremony in my honour. Where's my medal by the way?" Dream asked. George scoffed.

"In case you didn't *realise*, I got a bit preoccupied." George said, an explosion being set off at that same moment. But nonetheless, he pulled the medal out of his pocket and shoved it into Dream's hands.

"Ok. So what's the rundown?" Dream asked, smiling down at the shiny disc, pulling it out and putting it around his neck.

"Person on a hoverboard of sorts, shoots massive fireballs. I don't know where the gem is. And I'm

going to transform back because I used my shield to save the mayor's son. So now we are screwed because we need both of us to defeat this villain." George said quickly. Dream blinked.

"The mayor's son. What's he like? Like his father?" Dream asked.

"Dream, not the time. What do we do about the villain." George said.

"We are going to distract them. Come on." Dream jumped up, running along to building to see the villain.

"What? Dream!" George yelled, running after his partner. Dream waved his arms at the villain.

"Hey, you!" Dream yelled, and the villain turned.

"Finally you show up, too. This wouldn't be much fun without the both of you. I need both your jewels." The person said.

"Only if you can catch us." Dream smirked. They shot a fireball at him, and Dream somersaulted out of the way. George began to panic. What the hell was Dream doing?

Dream started running, away from the villain, back along a few rooftops. The villain turned to George, shooting a fireball at him instead. George jumped out of the way, then started running after Dream.

"Dream! I have to go!" George yelled, as he eventually caught up. The pair were running in sync.

"Trust me, G." Dream said. George gritted his teeth.

Dream suddenly stopped, and turned around. George did too, the villain right there. George shot an arrow, which the villain dodged, laughing.

They were lower now, but still on the rooftops.

"Your powers are pathetic. A shield? And a copy of yourself? You can only use them once too. How sad. And your only sources of attacking are your measly sword and pathetic bow. I can shoot fucking fire out of my hands, as many times as I want. You have no chance against me." They gloated, shooting two fireballs at each hero, who both dodged.

George's pendant started flashing rapidly, causing him to look down in panic. He looked back at Dream, who was still staring at the villain.

"Dream." George said through his teeth.

"Hold on twenty more seconds, G. Please." Dream said back, looking at George with an unusual amount of seriousness in his eyes. George nodded, placing all his trust into his friend.

"Look. GNotFound is about to change. Imagine being the two main heroes of this city, but not even able to stay longer than like ten minutes after using your crappy power. Must be sad." The villain pouted in mockery.

George quickly jumped out of the way of another fireball aimed at him.

"Dream." George said again, his voice wavering with uncertainty as he felt his seconds tick down.

George looked back at the villain, and had to stop himself from reacting when he saw the figure behind.

*Dream* was sneaking up behind them. George looked between the two *Dream*'s. The one next to him had his arms crossed, staring at the villain with a smirk on his face.

The other behind the villain looked at George, giving him a wink, before jumping and kicking the hover board out from under the villain, making them tip and fall onto their back. *Dream* then put his hands on their wrists, and his knees on their legs.

George stared in shock, looking back at the *Dream* that he had been talking to.

"G, a little help, please." *Dream* said through gritted teeth. The villain was yelling, their hands red with heat that was very clearly burning *Dream*.

George ran over, immediately seeing the necklace they had on, and ripped it off their neck.

The villain transformed back to their civilian self, and *Dream* let go, rubbing his hands and hissing in pain.

"I've been talking to fake *Dream* this whole time!" George yelled.

"No, it was real me at the start. Then I conjured him after I ran away, neither you or the villain noticed when I hid behind a wall." *Dream* said, still massaging his hands.

"That was... really smart, *Dream*. Are your hands- Shit shit shit." George said, the buzzing growing louder as he was seconds away from changing.

And he was on top of a random roof in the middle of the city.

George sprinted and dove behind a wall, his body transforming the second he did, and he let out a massive sigh in relief.

"G?" *Dream* said, and George tensed.

"Don't come over here, *Dream*." George said in a threatening tone.

"Ok, ok. I won't. Wouldn't want to see you naked-"

"I'm not naked, dipshit!" George retorted.

"Sure."

"Ok, I'm leaving. Bye *Dream*." George said, opening the rooftop door and going into the building, where stairs for the apartment building awaited him.

"See you soon, G." *Dream* replied, and George was confused at the slight tone of disappointment.

George closed the door behind him, looking down at his chest. He tucked the pendant back behind his t-shirt, but then his fingers lifted the medal, which he still had.

A small smile appeared on George's face.

But it fell when he realised he had to hide his biggest achievement somewhere in his crappy room.



Boy oh boy I have a lot planned.  
Measly earthlings, we are just getting started

# Always at a stalemate

## Chapter Summary

Everyone interrogates Clay about the ceremony. And he decides to sit with George in history class.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay walked through the school halls, barely paying attention to anyone.

He kept thinking back to yesterday, at the event. When G *held* him. That was closest they've ever been.

Clay's cheeks blushed slightly as he remembered the close contact. He had his arms around G's neck, and could hear his racing heartbeat when he leaned his head against him. He could feel G's breaths on his face when the superhero had looked down at him.

It was something out of Clay's dream's.

"Clay!" He turned and saw Niki jogging over. He smiled at her, he liked Niki, she was really sweet and was the one who added him to the group chat.

"Hi Niki." Clay said. Wilbur had come over too.

"Clay! The entire thing was on the news. There was so many videos of GNotFound saving you. What was it like?" Wilbur said. Niki nudged him.

"But are you ok, Clay? Like you could have died. Are you hurt?" Niki asked, concern in her eyes. Wilbur nodded but clearly wanted more interesting details.

"I'm fine. It was crazy, it happened so fast." Clay said.

"Were you scared?" Wilbur asked.

"I mean, not really." Clay said honestly.

"You weren't?" Niki asked shocked.

"I trusted GNotFound. I knew he'd save me." Clay said, also the truth.

"Holy shit, Clay!" He heard Nick's voice, and turned to see a small group coming towards him. Tommy, Nick and George. But Nick was dragging George along.

"Big C!" Tommy said, a huge grin on his face. Wilbur rolled his eyes.

"Go away Tommy." Wilbur said.

"Clay are you friends with GNotFound." Tommy said, ignoring Wilbur and turning to Clay. It made him laugh.

"Um, no. He just saved me, that's it." Clay said, but had a small smile on his face. Actually, they were friends. *G said he was my friend.*

"We saw the whole thing on TV. It was terrifying to watch. And I texted you last night but you didn't respond." Nick said. Clay was preoccupied with his sister, his dad, and some medics.

"Were you scared?" George asked slightly softer than the others, glancing at Clay. Clay looked at him.

"Why does everyone keep asking me that? I wasn't. I had my full trust in GNotFound. I was only scared for my sister." Clay said.

"So what was it like? What was GNotFound like? I've only been close to him once, at the school that one time but he had to go and I didn't talk to him. Is he cool? Is he nice? Is he strong? He must be, he picked you up, and you're tall as hell." Nick rambled on, making Clay chuckle.

"Yeah, was he even more British in person?" Tommy added.

"What was being in his shield like?" Wilbur asked.

"GNotFound was cool. Really nice, I spoke to him before the ceremony started too. Um. Yeah, he's amazing. Didn't even hesitate when saving me and Drista. He was strong, the superpowers do that. He was indeed British. And the shield was cool, made everything slightly muffled." Clay answered each question.

George felt his cheeks go pink at the indirect complements. *Clay thought I was amazing.*

"Woah. That's so cool. I'm so jealous." Nick said. Clay raised an eyebrow at him. "I mean, like, the getting saved by GNotFound part. Not the danger and fire part. But I really want to talk to GNotFound. I've spoken to Dream before." Nick said, attempting to defend himself. Clay saw George roll his eyes.

"He keeps bragging about how he's spoken with Dream." George muttered.

"Well, I did. Dream even yelled at me! Oh my God, it was the best day of my life." Nick said. George sighed.

"What happened to your hands?" Wilbur asked, noticing the bandages wrapped around Clay's hands. Everyone looked now, all voicing their concern.

"Oh, um, they got a bit burnt, from the wood on the stage." Clay lied. Actually, it was when he was holding down the villain. He had her wrists pinned, but her power burnt him.

As a superhero, they are nearly invulnerable, and they heal extremely quickly. Any injury they get when they are transformed, heals. But Clay had to change back, since he used his power. And his hands didn't heal in time. So he had to get his hands wrapped up by a doctor as soon as he returned.

But what Clay discovered a few months ago was if he gets an injury as a civilian, transforming won't heal it. His powers only heal injuries that he gets while being Dream. This is some sort of mechanism to protect his identity. If one day he has a broken arm, he can't just magically heal after transforming. So his powers only heal injuries he sustains as Dream.

"You got hurt?" George asked, still soft as he looked at Clay's hands in disappointment.

"Only a bit, it's not that bad. The doctor just wanted to wrap them up and keep them clean." Clay

assured him. He knew it would be fine. The next time he transforms, they'll heal.

"What about Drista?" George asked.

"She's completely fine." Clay said.

The school bell rang through the hallways, and students started moving towards their respected classes.

"Math." Nick groaned. Everyone else left except for Nick, George and Clay, who all had Math together with Mrs Arley. George's least favourite teacher.

As they walked towards their class, Nick was still throwing questions about the whole thing at Clay, who was patiently answering them.

"What does he smell like?"

"Nick! Quit bothering Clay, he had an eventful day yesterday and is probably exhausted." George said.

"You're right. Sorry." Nick said.

"It's fine, Nick." Clay smiled.

They entered the classroom, and went to their seats. Darryl waved at them, as they sat down in the row in front of him. George waved back. Nick and George sat together, but Clay was on the other side of aisle, sitting next to some random girl, due to the seating plan.

"How are you feeling today, Gogy." Nick asked. George looked at him.

"What?" He asked.

"You weren't well yesterday at bowling so you went home. Did you sleep like I asked?" Nick asked. George slowly nodded.

"Yep. Went right to sleep." George said. Nick narrowed his eyes.

"Then what are these." He said, pointing just below George's eyes. George instinctively touched his eye bags.

"Are you judging my eye bags?" George asked.

"Yes."

"Well, I did sleep a bit." George shrugged.

"A bit?" Nick stared at George. George stared back. And then he gave in.

"Ok, fine. I stayed up a little bit longer working on my comp sci. assignment." George said. Nick scoffed. "I needed to! It's due soon, and I haven't finished my code." He didn't lie, he did work on his assignment when he got home yesterday. But he stopped around midnight.

But it took him ages to fall asleep as usual, and he had a nightmare, and woke up ridiculously early. *How can my body be so desperate for sleep, but refuse it at the same time.*

"George, you need sleep. You're no fun when your dead."

"I did sleep! I got at least six hours."

He got two.

"Oh. That's actually pretty good, that's what I usually get. But you haven't slept the past few nights, you need to catch up. You're in sleep debt, Gogy."

"That's not a thing."

"Actually, it is. We were talking about sleep debt in my psychology class."

"Whatever. I'm fine. How was bowling?" George asked.

"Oh, bowling? I won, by far." Nick said, lifting his chin in pride.

"Really?"

"Of course."

"Ok, class. That's enough chitchat. Everyone is working through Chapter 14.2. You're doing integration again. You've done this before, it's a recap chapter. But if you have any questions just let me know." Mrs Arley said, before sitting at her desk. Everyone opened up their laptops to their text book to start working through questions.

It was silent. Mrs Arley had that kind of power in this class. Except for Nick, who was always trying to mess with George. And the occasionally cough or tapping.

George noticed a lot of the tapping sounds in this class come from Clay. Maybe he noticed because he was always tuned into Clay's actions. *Like the stalker I am.*

Like now, Clay was tapping his pen against his paper. It was never loud enough to annoy people. George just noticed things.

Noticed things about Clay.

George remembered yesterday, when he held Clay close to him. The only thing on his mind was to get Clay to safety. To save Clay.

But now George thought about the way Clay had buried his head into his shoulder, to stop inhaling the smoke. He remembered the feeling of Clay tightening his grip around his neck to feel safer.

George felt a slight blush on his cheeks as he remembered it all. Every small detail, every small touch. It made his heart flutter.

He looked over at the blonde boy, *dirty blonde*, as George described. He looked at the tapping pen, and the bandaged hands. Clay got hurt. George failed and got Clay hurt. He should have reacted sooner when he saw the villain, should have insisted the two teens get off the stage first. Should have taken him and Drista in the shield at the same time. Should have come back quicker.

He was overthinking every action, every decision. There was so many ways that would have been better. He should have done better.

Clay stopped tapping and looked up at George, whose face turned red when Clay had caught him staring.

Clay sent him a smile, but George just turned and stared at his blank notebook, wanting to die.

He had to stop crushing on him. They were friends, and would never be more. George needs to move on.

- 

George hated history. It was so incredibly boring and he never understood the point in learning it. It was just the past, how is it useful to the present.

Plus; he didn't sit with friends in this class. He sat at back, alone, sometimes scrolling through his phone, or checking the news stories. Or staring at a particular someone.

Clay was in this class, but he sat with his group near the front. Wilbur, Karl and Fundy. Niki had another class at this time.

The teacher, Mr Bell, was a strange teacher. He somehow had excellent hearing, but was very unobservant. He sat while he taught, usually just telling them to read through the textbook.

George didn't mind not talking to someone. In fact, he liked a class where he could just be alone with his thoughts.

So when he felt something be thrown at him, dragging him out of his daydreams, he was very confused. He looked up, and saw Clay staring at him. George looked in his lap and saw a scrunched up piece of paper.

He cautiously looked back up at Clay who gestured for him to open it. George glanced at the teacher, who was sitting, typing on his computer.

George carefully unfolded the paper.

*you know you could sit with us if you want. you look kinda lonely*

George felt a small smile form on his face, and he looked back up at Clay. George shrugged. Clay gestured to the spare seat beside him.

He couldn't sit next to Clay.

George shook his head, pointing to the window that he liked sitting next to. Clay cocked his head to the side, and George shrugged.

Clay turned to look at Mr Bell. And then he slowly stood up, grabbed his bag, and slowly started walking down the aisle, backwards. George's eyes grew wider as Clay got closer and closer, somehow not being seen by the teacher.

Clay got to George's row, and then quickly sat down, making his chair squeak. Mr Bell immediately looked up, eyeing the class.

"What was that?" He asked, staring everyone down. Clay was still, hoping he wouldn't realise he moved seats. After a few seconds, Mr Bell looked back at his laptop.

Clay had to bite his hand to stop himself from laughing. George was just staring at Clay.

"Wh-what are you-" George whispered, but didn't know how to finish. When Clay stopped laughing, he put his bag on the table and looked at George.

"I had no clue what you were trying to say." Clay whispered. George was lost for words. Why is Clay sitting with him.

"I- well- I like the window..." George said softly, looking at the glass. Clay looked out the window too.

"Oh. So that's why you don't want to sit at the front with us?" Clay asked. George nodded. *Actually, I don't want to sit with you. I can't think straight when I'm around you.*

"I'll sit here with you instead." Clay said, pulling out his laptop. George looked at him in confusion.

"Why?" George asked.

"You're lonely back here."

"I'm not lonely." George whispered back.

"Well, you're not lonely now I'm here." Clay grinned. George felt another small smile grow on his face without his permission. He looked back down at his hands, to hide his blush.

"So why do you like the window?" Clay asked. George shrugged, still staring at his hands.

"I just like looking at the people passing." George mumbled. He then glanced at Clay. "What about your other friends?" George asked, gesturing to the guys at the front of the room. Clay looked at them too.

"They haven't even noticed I've left. They were talking about some musical I've never seen." Clay whispered.

George looked at the trio. Wilbur was the one whispering the most, Fundy was nodding along and Karl was responding and trying not to laugh. George hasn't really spoken to Fundy much. But he's chatted with Karl. Him and Nick were neighbours.

"Look, George, I wanted to apologise again." Clay whispered. George furrowed his brows, looking at Clay.

"For what?"

"For that night at the party. It was kind of embarrassing. I just vented to you. You didn't need to know any of it, I normally keep that stuff to myself. It was dumb." Clay said.

"You already apologised, and I really don't mind. I'm glad you felt like you could tell me, even if you were quite drunk." George said.

"You're the best George." Clay said. George was embarrassed by how much he blushed at that one comment. "But I'm still mad at you for not telling me who you like." Clay added. George stopped breathing.

"Well, you'll never know." George said back, after taking a deep breath.

"Come on, pleeease. At least give me the first letter of her name." Clay said. *Her.*

"Well, who is *your* crush." George asked, changing the topic. Clay hesitated again.

"I'm not telling, since you won't tell me." Clay said. George smiled.

"Here we are again, at a stalemate." George said.

"A stalemate." Clay repeated.

•

"You know what, I never thought I'd say this. But I'm going to miss yeast." Nick said, staring at the blue solution before George picked it up and pulled it away from him.

"Well, at *yeast* you won't have to miss lunch for it anymore." Clay said, and Nick burst out laughing at the pun, giving Clay a high-five.

"You know, I hated this experiment at first, but now I have a new bedwars partner." Nick said. Clay put a hand over his heart.

"Aw, Nick."

"What did Nicolas do." Mr Peterson sighed, coming over to our table.

Mr Peterson had finally returned back to school. He had to undergo questioning with the cops and then took some work leave for a bit. But now he's back.

"I did nothing. In fact, I was complimenting Clay." Nick said. Clay nodded. Mr Peterson rolled his eyes.

"Sir, why do you hate me. I'm a great student." Nick said.

"I don't hate you, Nick." Mr Peterson said.

"That's not what villain you said to George. You said I was more disruptive in class." Nick said.

"I don't remember anything from that, and I'd rather you not bring it up. It wasn't my finest hour. But I'm not wrong, you are disruptive."

"How are you going now Mr Peterson?" George asked. The teacher sighed.

"I'm alright. Still confused about the whole thing. I don't remember anything. I just remember coming to my senses and then talking with Dream and GNotFound who said I had done some bad things." Mr Peterson sighed.

"No one blames you for what happened. It's clear no one is under control when they are a supervillain." Clay said.

Mr Peterson just hummed, and then looked at George.

"Oh, Mr Davidson. You've reminded me, you need to go to the principals office after class." He said, pulling out a notebook. George frowned.

"What? Why?" He asked. Mr Peterson hummed as he flicked through his book.

"I believe it was something to do with your attendance. And.... Mr Block, she has an appointment with you and your father on Monday. Mrs Wilkinson asked me to tell you." Mr Peterson said, nodding as he spoke.

George took a deep breath. It's just his attendance. His parents already know it's an issue, what more could the principal do.

"With.... *with* my father? What about? Why is he coming?" Clay asked, his voice clearly showing



his panic.

"I'm not sure, I'm afraid. That's something you'll have to ask your father about." He said, before projecting his notebook and walking away.

"No way." Nick said, with a laugh. "This is the first time George is going to see her and not me!" He said, doing a little dance. George glared at him. Clay was tapping his hand on the table as he thought.

"Not funny Nick." George said.

"What? Why is your attendance so bad anyways George. You're always sick right? Or have appointments. Surely they know that right." Nick said. George bit his lip.

George never really got sick or had appointments, it was just what he told Nick so he wouldn't ask questions.

"I can't believe my father is willingly coming to the school." Clay said. George and Nick looked at him. "He never comes. Why is he coming?"

"Did you do something?" Nick asked. Clay thought about it.

"I... the only thing I can think of is my sometimes crap attendance too. But that's not a big enough deal for my father to come. Right?" Clay said. George and Nick had no clue how to respond.

•

George stood in front of the principal's office and knocked. He had been here only a few times. For mundane things, and once because he was considered affiliated with one of Nick's big foam pranks.

"Enter." A voice called, and George pushed open the door. The office was what you would expect a principal's office to be like, except if you include the obsessive amount of plants in the room.

Mrs Wilkinson sat at her desk, and looked up when George entered, lowering her glasses to look at him better. She was a middle aged woman, shorter than George with black, slightly greying hair. She looks really nice. And so far, she has been really nice to George throughout high school.

"Hello Mr Davidson, it's good to see you again. It's been a while since I last saw you." She said, gesturing for George to sit. He did, and started fiddling with his fingers nervously.

"I think about a year ago." George said. She nodded. "Um, so why have you brought me in here?" He asked.

"Well, as I'm sure you've figured out, we do an attendance check about halfway through the school year for everyone, just after the summer break. Over the past 6 months you've been a senior, your attendance has not been great, George. And I mean, it is currently the worst for your cohort. Well, it's almost tied-worst. But the other student has family commitments." Mrs Peterson said.

George has the worst attendance in the grade? He supposed that made sense.

"I know. You told my parents and I had a chat with them." George said.

"Yes, we had to inform your parents because we are concerned for you. You've been telling teachers that you are sick or have other commitments but when we fact-checked this with your parents, they said you haven't been sick enough to take off school." She said.

"I've already had this conversation with my parents. Why am I here?"

"I have to talk to you, it's school policy. I have to warn you about the consequences for this behaviour if it is maintained. You will be applying for college soon, and your attendance and grades are important to that process. Missing class as much as you do, especially in senior year, is not going to end well for you George. Your final exams are coming up in only a few months. How can you expect to get into your preferred college if you are only at school for half the time?" She asked.

George looked down.

"You were such a good student a year ago. Excellent grades, in the top of your cohort. But the second half of junior year you started to fall. And this first half of senior year is drastically different. Has something happened George? Something you can't tell your parents?" She asked.

George felt it again, the pressure behind his eyes.

"Is everything alright?" She asked.

That stupid question. The one that sets him off. It's just a simple question, and people ask it often, but he gets so tired of saying yes.

"Everything's fine." He said quietly.

"It's ok to not be fine, George. But instead of getting through things alone, you can talk about it. Even if you don't want to with your parents, or friends, or me. How do you feel about an appointment with Dr Puffy?" She asked.

"The school councillor?" George asked, and she nodded. George shook his head. "No, I don't need to see her. I'm fine." He said.

"It could be really good. Even if you don't talk about your feelings or anything, Dr Puffy is also there for college things. If you're trying to figure out what you want to do or what college or what you need to do for it...."

"No, I don't need to see her. Thank you." George said.

"I'm sorry, George. But it's a school policy for any student with an attendance score as low as yours, to have a minimum of five appointments with Dr Puffy. It's to fix your attendance." She said.

"That's a dumb policy. I'm fine." George said. He was fine, he just had a lot to do. And sure, it was overwhelming and making him exhausted and affecting his friendships, grades, sleep and eating. But he's fine. He doesn't need a councillor.

"We have already spoken to your parents. Your first appointment is on Monday. She will send you an email with the time." Mrs Wilkinson said.

George stood up. Why was everyone in his business, trying to fix things. No one can fix this. Only he can.

"I'm not a bad student."

"I know you're not. That's why we want to help you, George. We want to see you, and all our students succeed." She said. George scoffed.

"Goodbye." He said, and turned to leave the room.

"Thank you, George." She said as he slammed the door shut behind him.

•

"Have you seen the news story?" Clay heard a voice, and turned to see Drista at the door.

"Which one? There's like a billion on the event yesterday." Clay said. She walked over with her phone, and handed it to him. He looked at the article.

***Mayor Block to blame for his children's endangerment?***

*Yesterday evening at the heroes award ceremony, a supervillain attacked, leaving Mayor Block's son, Clay Block and daughter, Drista Block in great peril on the stage, both being rescued by GNotFound. But many question the events that led up to this. Why were the teenagers left last on the stage? Where did their father and all the employees go?*

"What?" Clay said as he read the title and snippet.

"Apparently people are upset that father left the stage before us. Because we are kids and our safety was considered not as important as the Mayor or any of the employees. People are mad." Drista said.

"Well, I mean, they did leave us for last. And you're fifteen years old for fucks sake." Clay said.

"Yeah, but they are saying father isn't a good dad. And that he shouldn't be mayor if he can't even care for his kids." Drista said. Clay just looked at her.

"And?" He asked.

"This isn't good, Clay! Some people want to open a full investigation into what happened on stage. There are rumours the mayor is corrupt." She said. Clay blinked.

"Well maybe they should open an investigation. What kind of people leave a fifteen year old girl last to leave?" Clay said. Drista hit him on the arm.

"Your being an idiot. This drama is not good for father. It means next election he might not be mayor." She said. Clay raised an eyebrow.

"You're telling me that's a bad thing?" He asked.

"Yes! Don't you remember what everything was like before he became mayor of this city? Look at how much better our lives are now." Drista said. Clay's smile fell.

When they were young, when their mother was still alive, their parents both ran a business together in their old city. It did well, and the family was comfortable in their wealth.

But when their mother passed away from an illness, their father changed. This was around when Clay was ten. He became cold and distant from his kids, putting all his attention to the business. But there was some legal issues that caused the business to close, and they lost their money and investments.

But David Block somehow, and quickly, got his wealth back. And then became mayor of this city, moving and bringing his children with him.

"Maybe he's not the best mayor, or the best father, but I don't want to go back to how things were before. I like our school. I like eating enough meals a day. I like not worrying about having electricity or not." Drista said, her voice wavering a bit as she spoke. Clay stood up and pulled her into a hug, and she wrapped her arms around him too.

"That won't happen. I won't let it, and neither will father. You know how stubborn he is. And becoming Mayor didn't bring the money, he fixed everything before it happened." Clay said. Drista nodded, sniffing.

"But I don't trust how he did that. At least this way we know for sure he gets a real salary." Drista muttered.

"I won't let anything happen, ok? We won't go back to that time." Clay said.

"Promise?" She asked, looking up at her brother, with glistening eyes. Clay nodded.

"I promise."

## Chapter End Notes

Another filler chapter.  
But follow me on twitter if you want  
[@/LottiaraT](#)

# The middle of the storm

## Chapter Summary

An alert forces George to ditch his therapy appointment. And forces Clay to run away from his father and principal.

## Chapter Notes

TW// unalive attempt

I will put an underline where the trigger starts and ends

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The weekend went by in a blur. George was only called to help the city two times. Which.... is more than he probably should have been called in for.

The first time was to hunt down and track some guy who was caught selling drugs. The police knew who it was, but lost him in the pursuit. George and Dream were called to help. They spent a few hours tracking him threw the city, mostly using the rooftops to their advantage.

The second time was for a supervillain. It was in the middle of the night when the alert went out. George was already awake though, working on his assignments.

The villain could manipulate their size. One second they were as tall as a building, and the next they were the size of an ant. It was a difficult one for the superheroes to fight. One second they had been attacking the giant, and then it seemed to have disappeared.

While Dream and George were talking, the villain crept up behind George, and then grew into their normal size, grabbing the hero and smashing his head against the wall. Dream reacted instantly, going to attack, but the villain shrunk again.

George was on the ground, waiting for everything to stop spinning as he recovered. Dream lost track of the tiny villain, which had run back over to George.

The villain grew a bit bigger, and grabbed George's pendant, about to pull it off but Dream saw and dove, pushing the villain away.

George got up too, and him and Dream managed to catch the villain by luring them into a room where they couldn't grow too big.

That was one of George's least favourite villains he's ever fought. It lasted hours and was just plain annoying.

But today, George had school. And had an appointment with Dr Puffy first thing, which was during his biology class.

Ironical that he has to miss class to talk to someone about how he always misses class.

George did not want to be here. He would rather be in biology. They had finished recording all the data for their assignment, and now just have to write up their reports. He'd rather do that than whatever this was.

He reached the school reception, where the office would be, and it's right near the principal's office too. George was about to go up to the receptionist, to say he had an appointment with Dr Puffy, but a certain blonde boy distracted him.

Clay was here, sitting with his father on some chairs as they waited, but he made eye contact with George when he walked in.

Clay smiled and got up, but his father grabbed his arm, making Clay look back at him. They spoke for a second, and then Clay looked at George, gesturing for him to come over. George took a deep breath and cautiously walked over to Clay and the Mayor.

"Hi George, what are you doing here?" Clay asked. George was about to respond but the Mayor cleared his throat, staring at his son. Clay nodded. "Sorry. George, this is my father. Dad, this is my friend George." Clay said.

"It's nice to meet you Mayor Block." George said nervously, sticking out a hand. The mayor shook it, his grip firm.

"I didn't realise Clay had a friend called George." The mayor said, looking at his son.

"Well, we haven't been friends for that long. And I don't really get a chance to talk to you about my school life." Clay said. The mayor didn't respond, and Clay turned back to George.

"So what are you doing at the reception? Don't we have biology?" Clay asked.

"The principal scheduled me an appointment with Dr Puffy." George said softly, slightly embarrassed.

"The guidance councillor? That's great George." Clay smiled, but George glanced at his father, who had a raised eyebrow. George shook his head.

"It's for a stupid reason." George muttered. Silence fell between the three of them. George was unsure what to say.

"Um, so what about you..." George asked.

"I'm not sure. No one has told me anything." Clay said, glancing sideways at his father who was just watching the teenagers talk. George nodded, then looked back over his shoulder.

"Um. I have to go, but I'll see you later?" George said, and Clay nodded.

"Bye George." He smiled. George turned and walked over to the receptionist.

"Hi, I have an appointment with Dr Puffy? I'm George Davidson." He said. The lady nodded and gestured for him to take a seat until Dr Puffy arrives. George thanked her and turned around.

Well this is awkward. He just said goodbye to Clay and now has to sit back down. Does he sit near him? Or somewhere else?

Luckily, he didn't have to worry, since someone came over to the Mayor and his son and got them

to follow her into the principal's office.

George sat down, letting his leg bounce up and down. He's never spoken with a psychologist or guidance councillor before. What if she's a mind reader.

A loud sound brought him out of his thoughts. The familiar ding that made his heart beat faster. George swallowed and pulled out his phone.

## **CODE RED**

**GNotFound and Dream assistance required immediately at the Turner Tower**

George swore under his breath, glancing up at the receptionist who was also checking her phone. George closed his eyes in frustration and pocketed his phone.

He knew how much trouble he was going to be in because of this. He was literally ditching a session made to address his low attendance.

George groaned and then got up and walked up to the receptionist again.

"I feel really really ill. Like I might faint. Can I go to the sick bay?" He asked. She narrowed her eyes at him.

"You look fine. Get some water and you can have a chocolate bar for some sugar if you want." She said, holding out a small bar. He didn't take it.

"I really think I should go home." He said.

"I was told this appointment was important. Sit down while I check if it can be rescheduled. Then you can go." She said. George turned and was going to walk to his seat, but he ran out of the door instead.

"Mr Davidson!" She yelled after him, but George ignored her.

He would deal with the consequences later, but right now, he needed to help. Whatever it was that he was needed for.

Meanwhile, in the principal's office, Clay and his father sat, as they waited for Mrs Wilkinson. The silence between them was suffocating Clay.

"That George boy, he seems quite odd." Mayor Block said. Clay looked at him.

"George is really nice." Clay said softly, trying not to start a fight. The Mayor hummed.

"An appointment with a shrink?" He added with a scoff. Clay felt his hands ball into fists.

"There's nothing wrong with getting help. And George is fine, it's just his attendance." Clay said. His father looked down at his son, narrowed eyes. Clay felt like he was shrinking under the state, leaning away slightly.

But the mayor thankfully didn't say much more. Clay let out the breath he had been holding, and looked away, thankful they didn't fight at school.

The principal eventually arrived, apologising for being late.

"So, I brought you both in because it feels more formal than an email. Thank you for taking time out of your day to come, sir." She said to the Mayor who just nodded.

Clay had been incredibly anxious the past few days. Since him and his Dad found out about the appointment, his father has been extremely cold and demanding. He kept asking Clay what he did, but gave up when Clay kept saying he didn't know, while on the verge of tears.

"So as I'm sure you're aware, it's the last half of senior year which means preparing for finals and college applications. We do a check in on our students every few months on things like behaviour, grades, attendance..."

"Is he failing?" The mayor asked, his ears red in the beginnings of anger.

"No, no he's not failing. The only issue we have is with his attendance. A few of the times it is because he has commitments with you, of course. However we have noticed a few other times where Clay has missed class and not provided a valid reason." She said.

The Mayor looked at his son, and Clay shrunk in his seat. He knew his attendance was bad. He didn't think it was bad enough to let his father know.

"How much has he missed?" His father asked slowly.

"A few hours a week, for the past six months. And before that was about an hour a week. We thought it was normal until the past few months where it has been excessive. Of course, we excused things like supervillain attacks on the school directly, or if he was sick with a medical certificate, or if he had a scheduled thing with you." Mrs Wilkinson said.

The mayor stared at Clay, who was avoiding eye contact.

Suddenly the ding echoed through the room, and all three checked their phones to see the red alert. Clay's eyes widened.

"Do you have to leave for that, sir? You can if needed, we can reschedule." The principal said. The mayor shook his head, looking at Clay.

"No. I want to know exactly what is going on with my son." He said, his voice filled with anger.

"Father we can talk about this another-"

"No, Clay. Tell me right now, why have you been ditching class? Where do you go?" He asked.

"I sometimes just go get food with some mates. School isn't interesting and I hate my subjects. I want to do what I'm actually passionate about." Clay said, his half lie well rehearsed. It was better than just denying it. The mayor was getting increasingly redder, and Clay was growing less confident by the second.

"What are your passions, Clay?" Mrs Wilkinson asked.

"I like coding. And video games." Clay said softly, looking down, away from his father. He also liked YouTube, and wanted to start a YouTube channel. But he would never tell his father that. And he would never actually go through with it.

"We have a computer science subject. Maybe if Clay takes that subject, his motivation in school



may increase." The principal subjected. The Mayor stared at his son.

"Coding? You like *video games*. None of that is a sustainable career. You like finance, and you are going to college for business." He said, his voice getting louder.

"Can we talk about this later?" Clay asked quietly. He always felt so small in the presence of his Dad.

"No the hell we aren't. You've been missing class, for no valid reason. Your grades are probably slipping and your goals have shifted." He said, his voice booming that even Mrs Wilkinson looked concerned.

"I really need to g-"

"Stay right where you are, Clay." Mayor Block said.

•

George had transformed and arrived at the Turner Tower, where a bunch of emergency vehicles were located. George looked up and could see someone at the top.

As soon as he had arrived, a policewoman pulled him to the side.

Trigger warning starts now- please read at own discretion. Remember there are so many other options and ways to get help if you need xx

"We have a jumper. 15 year old female, her name is Lily Brown. We need you to stop her from jumping because we can't break her fall." She said. George's eyes went wide and he nodded, turning to the building.

He ran inside, people moving out of the way for him. He clicked on the elevator and it took him all the way to the roof.

When he exited, he saw some police standing nearby. And he saw the girl on the ledge. She was looking at them in fear.

"Everyone get away, you're scaring her." George said, and everybody turned to George, immediately backing away. The girl looked at him.

"GNotFound?" She asked. He noticed the tears on her face, the exhaustion in her voice and the scars on her arms. George gave her a kind smile. "Why are you here?"

"It's my job to protect everyone." George said, walking slightly closer. He turned to all the cops, gesturing for them to go back inside. They listened, and left.

"Why do you care about me?" She asked.

"I care about everyone. What's your name." He asked, despite already knowing it.

"Lily." She said quietly, looking back down over the ledge. Her legs were dangling. The city had a lot of buildings, the taller ones closer to the city centre. There was only two skyscrapers, though. Luckily this tower wasn't too high.

"It's nice to meet you, Lily. You know my name, but you can call me G if you want." George said. She sniffled.

"G?" She said. George nodded and took another step.

"Don't come closer." She said, her voice wavering. George put his hands in the air.

"Ok, I won't. But I want to talk with you for a minute, is that ok?" He asked. She hesitated, looking back at the ground, but then nodded.

"How old are you Lily?" He asked.

"15." She said.

"You're in high school?" He asked, and she nodded.

"I hate it there." She said.

"How come." George pressed carefully.

"The people are so mean. They call me names, and hurt me." She said, wiping her nose.

"That's horrible, no one deserves that." George said, taking a small step closer which she didn't notice.

"I just don't want to hear it anymore. I know I'm worthless. I know I should kill myself. So I thought maybe it's time I listen." She said.

"You shouldn't listen to them, Lily. The words they say are made only to hurt you. They aren't real, their words are meaningless. I know how much words can hurt though. Sometimes they hurt more than physical pain. But you have to remind yourself that they are just words, and they have no evidence attached to them." George said.

"But everything they say is true."

"No, it's not. They don't know you Lily. The only person who truly knows you is yourself. And the people you care about, and the people who care about you. The words they say are the only words that should matter. And if they truly care about you, they will only ever tell the truth. Who do you care about Lily?" George asked. She thought about it.

"My little sister, and my Mom."

"What's your sister's name."

"Josie."

"What does Josie tell you."

"She says... she thinks I'm really cool. She thinks I'm hilarious, but all I do is tickle her and pretend to be magical creatures."

"And she cares about you?" George asked.

"Yeah... she does."

"Where is she right now?"

"At school. She's in first grade."

"Where does she think you are?"

"High school." Lily said softly.

"What if she was here right now? What would you do?" George asked. Lily looked at him, not realising how close he had gotten.

"Tickle her."

"There is always someone who cares, Lily. Josie cares. And even if no one else knows who you are, I care. I don't know you, and you don't really know me. But I care. My heart aches for you, Lily. The words you hear are words no one should ever have to hear." George said. He could feel his own eyes prickling with tears at the whole situation.

"But it just hurts so bad. I've tried so hard to keep going for her, for Josie. And for Mom. But I want to be selfish for once. I just want the pain to end." She said, looking back down.

"Lily, no. You don't want this. There is so many options, so many things you haven't done yet, so many experiences you are get to have. I promise you, I swear, that things will get better. It's hard to see when you're in the middle of the storm, but there is a clearing somewhere. It may take a while to find, but storms don't last forever. There have been times in my life where I thought the storm would never pass, where I thought I may as well get swept up in it. But I made my way out, and it is so worth it." George said, recalling a metaphor used in one school talk.

"It's not worth the wait, it's not worth the effort." Lily said.

"It is. It is, I swear. Think about Josie. You don't want to leave her in this world alone. Imagine if she was taken away from you. That's how she will feel if you let the world take you." George said.

George heard the door behind him open, and turned to see Dream come out. George put up a hand to stop him, and he obeyed, staying by the door, and George turned back to Lily.

"But I'm so t-tired." Lily sobbed.

"I know. I know, life is exhausting. But there is so much to life that is worth waiting for, that is worth seeing. I promise you, that everything will get better. I can help you, Lily." George said. The girl turned to him, her brown hair swaying in the wind, and her bloodshot green eyes letting a singular tear fall.

"I've done enough waiting." She whispered, and then pushed herself off. George yelled and ran forward, towards the ledge, instinctively jumping and diving off it as well.

"G!" Dream yelled after him, running to the edge.

George grabbed the girl in the air, and pulled her towards him.

"Shield!" He yelled, bracing himself. He felt Lily twist in his grip, but he didn't let go. The blue shield surrounded them as they plummeted to the ground.

When they finally hit, the shield absorbed the impact, and George sat down, holding Lily, an arm tightly around her. She was sobbing.

"No! No! You ruined it! You messed it up!" She yelled, punching him in the chest, but her punches

were weak, her sobs making it hard to breathe. He just held her tightly.

"It's ok. You can blame me. I don't mind taking the blame. Because it isn't your time yet, Lily. Josie needs you." He said softly, still holding her tight, a hand gently pressed against her hair.

He let his shield go, and he lifted Lily up, taking her to the paramedics. Lily had stopped fighting, just crying.

"She's physically ok." George said, but the rest was enough information for the paramedics.

Trigger warning over-however there will be mentions of it throughout this chapter, and possibly in the future

(no one was hurt)

"G!" Dream yelled, and George turned to see the green man running towards him.

George wasn't expecting the hug that Dream embraced him with. George gave in though, letting the taller boy rest his chin on his head, and hold his head against his chest.

"You fucking scared me." Dream said, pulling away. George gave a small quick smile in response. "Is she ok?" Dream asked. George nodded. "And are you ok?"

"What? Yeah, of course I'm fine." George said.

"I'm not talking physically, idiot. I'm sure that was hard, and stressful." Dream said. George nodded slowly and hummed. "Do you want to talk about it?" Dream asked, and George shook his head.

"I'm ok, Dream." He sighed. "I have to go." And he turned to leave, but Dream grabbed his hand.

"Please talk to me if you need. I'm the only person who will actually understand and that you can actually tell. Please don't bottle it up." Dream said. George sent him a small, unauthentic smile.

"Thanks, Dream." He said, and then turned to leave.

George walked away, not bothering to rush. He knew he would be in trouble. He knew he should get back to class.

But he decided against it, instead going towards his house, where he decided he will sleep. He needed time to process everything that just happened.

Sure, he saved a girl. But that wasn't because of his words, that was because of his powers. Clearly he said the wrong things.

His rational thoughts were telling him there wasn't much he could say to change a stubborn mind. But he was also telling himself how he had failed, in a way.

George had transformed back and made it to his house, to his room, where he collapsed on his bed and stared at the ceiling. Thank god his parents were at work. But he was not looking forward to the talk they will most definitely be having tonight.

•

Clay didn't know where to go. He had screwed up, big time. He ran out of the office, leaving the principal and his father. It wasn't just because of the red alert, he was overwhelmed with everything and needed to get away.

But now what? He couldn't go back to the school. He couldn't go home. His father was going to kill him.

He had transformed back into Clay, and was walking through the streets. He didn't want to get in trouble yet, but he didn't want to be alone.

He sat down on a bench and opened up his phone, unsure of what to do.

He wanted to be with G, but he had to go. Clay missed the beginning of everything that just went down, but when the girl jumped, and G jumped after her, he felt the most scared he had ever been in his life.

He really didn't want to be alone right now.

He wasn't sure what made him do it, but he had opened up George's contact.

**Clay**

Hey, how did your appointment  
with Dr Puffy go?

He was genuinely curious. He knew it was to help with George's attendance, since that was what his appointment with the principal was about, just like Clay's.

**George**

Oh. That. I may or may  
not have ditched it

**Clay**

Really? Where are you now?

**George**

Home. I just couldn't do it today

**Clay**

I feel you. I also may or may not  
have sprinted out of the room with  
the principal and my father

**George**

Wait, really?

**Clay**

Yea... hey wanna meet up?

There was a long minute where Clay didn't get a response and he thought he did something wrong.

**George**

I'm really tired I might just sleep

**Clay**

Pleeeeeeease George. It won't be for too long, I have soccer training anyways

**George**

I don't know

**Clay**

I'm coming to your house and you're coming out with me

**George**

You know where I live?

Clay had already started walking towards where George's house was, when he realised he was Dream when he visited.

**Clay**

Oh, no I don't. But you're going to tell me where you live and I'm going to make you go on an adventure with me. Please gogy

**George**

Ok, 24 Lore St

**Clay**

omw

George pretty much died when he saw the text from Clay asking to hang out. He had to keep reminding himself it wasn't a date, just two friends hanging out. One of whom is gay and in love with the other, but still is not a date.

George was half expecting Clay to not actually show up. But the knock on his door about 20 minutes later proved him wrong.

Clay was standing there, a big smile on his face. George just stared at him.

"Hi." Clay said.

"H-hi." George replied. Clay looked over his shoulder.

"Oh my God, is that a cat!" He said, running inside and kneeling on the ground for the small, grey

cat. "What's its name?" Clay asked, looking back up at George who was still standing there.

"Cat."

"Your cat's name is Cat?" Clay laughed. George nodded, and closed the door. Cat was nuzzling his head into Clay's hand who was cooing.

"Um, welcome to my home, I-I guess. Um, it's not as nice as yours, I'm sure. It's a lot smaller and really messy and kind of old but-"

"George, I love your house. It's way more homey than the stupid mansion." Clay said, standing up and looking at his friend.

"Oh, right. Thanks." George said, sitting down on a stool nearby.

"Why are you sitting down? Come on, let's go get icecream or something. Let's get outside." Clay said enthusiastically.

George really didn't want to. He was still thinking about what happened earlier with Lily. *She was only 15.*

"I don't know, Clay." George said.

"Come on, pleeeeeease. I'll pay. It'll be fun!" Clay said, a big smile on his face. How could George say no.

So that's how the two of them ended up walking together to the nearest icecream store. George spent the walk staring at his feet, while Clay chatted away.

"Are you ok, George? You're really quiet, more quiet than usual." Clay said. George shrugged.

"Just thinking about how much trouble I'm going to be in." He said. Clay's smile fell.

"Me too. But I like to use distractions to make me feel less anxious." Clay said. George laughed slightly forcefully.

"I like to wallow in my feelings until they erode my brain and I can no longer function."

"Oh. Well. That's one way of doing it, I guess." Clay said, patting George on the shoulder. "Neither of these methods seems particularly healthy. But it's nothing a bit of icecream can't fix!" Clay said, opening the door to the store and entering, with George following close behind.

"You don't actually have to pay for me, by the way." George said, holding up some cash.

"No, I do. I made you leave your bed. I owe you for not letting me be alone." Clay said.

George was also thankful he wasn't alone right now.

"I never get icecream. I never have time." George commented as they looked at all the flavours.

"Me neither, that's why I wanted some now. What flavour you want?" Clay asked. George looked at the flavours.

"Oh. Um. I'll just get that yellow one, umm is it lemon or something?" George asked, pointing at one of the yellow ones. Clay shook his head.

"No, that's actually lime sorbet. Lemon sorbet is white, not yellow." Clay said, pointing at a white flavour near it.

"What? Why the hell is lemon sorbet white? Shouldn't it be yellow." George said, making Clay chuckled again and shrug.

"I forgot you are colourblind. That's so crazy." Clay said. George shrugged, he's just used to it now. "What's your favourite colour then?" Clay asked.

"Well, I can actually see blue. So yeah, blue." George said. Clay smiled.

"Blue like GNotFound blue?" Clay asked. George hesitated for a second.

"Yeah. That kind of blue." He said, clearing his throat from awkwardness. "What about you?"

"Green." He said. George laughed.

"Green like Dream?"

"Yeah." He laughed. "Although, I'm guessing you can't really see his colour, right?" Clay asked.

"It looks the same as piss-yellow." George nodded, and Clay laughed again, and George heard the smallest wheeze let out. He couldn't help but smile, it reminded him of Dream.

"That's awful."

"Yeah. Anyways, I don't want lime, what should I get instead?" George asked, being overwhelmed by the number of options.

"I'm getting vanilla." Clay said.

"Just vanilla? That's kind of boring, isn't it?" George asked.

"It tastes good, though!" Clay defended himself, and George smiled.

"Ok, well I'll just get chocolate then." He said, walking to the employee who was patiently waiting.

"No, I'm paying." Clay said, running over in front of George. "One chocolate and one vanilla." Clay said, holding out his card.

"What? No, let me pay for mine, Clay." George said, ducking around Clay and putting his note on the table. Clay laughed and grabbed George around the waist, dragging him to the side and grabbing his money, holding it up in the air, with his card in the other.

"On card." Clay said, looking down at George smugly, who couldn't reach his money.

"That's not fair." George said, turning away. His face was bright red from Clay's touch.

Clay paid, and the ice creams were prepared and handed to each of them, the woman giving them a smile.

"Enjoy your date." She said.

George just about died on the spot, and he almost dropped his icecream. Clay laughed and put an arm loosely around George's shoulders.



"Thank you, we will." He said, guiding George out of the store, who was incapacitated.

As soon as they left, Clay let go and burst out laughing. George ran a hand through his hair. The lady thought they were on a date.

"That's was hilarious. I wonder why she thought we were on a date." Clay chuckled, licking his icecream. George forced a laugh too, and also licked his icecream.

"That's so weird." George laughed as they continued their walk.

They ate their ice creams in silent for a few minutes, as they walked through the streets of the city. George realised they were a few streets away from Turner Tower, and he began to feel incredibly anxious.

"Um, where are we going?" George asked.

"Not sure, just walking in a random direction. Any ideas?" Clay asked. George tried to think of something, but the only thing on his mind was the tower and the girl who jumped.

Despite George's efforts, he couldn't convince her. She wanted to die. Was it selfish of George to stop her? But she was only 15, and not in the right mental state. But if he wasn't transformed she would have died, so the only thing that saved her was his powers, not his words.

He said the wrong things, and he almost killed her. It was his fault that she had almost died.

"George?" Clay said, now standing in front of the shorter boy. George didn't realise but he had stopped walking. He felt an immense amount of dread weighing down his chest, making it hard to breathe. Why can't he breathe? Now he's panicking about how he can't breathe.

George couldn't hear Clay anymore, the only sound in his ears was his rapid heartbeat.

*"No! No! You ruined it! You messed it up!"* Lily's voice repeated in his head.

"George? George." He heard Clay's voice.

"I can't breathe." George said, unintentionally wheezing as he desperately tried to suck in more air.

"It's ok. Listen to me, listen to my breathing." Clay's said, but George didn't want to open his eyes. He didn't even remember closing them in the first place.

"I'm not cut out for this." George whispered, thinking about the threat the Mayor made, about how he should give up his jewel. Maybe he should.

He felt pressure on his shoulders, and knew someone was with him. He could hear Clay breathing, it was slow and deliberate, especially in comparison to his own.

George tried to imitate it, slowly drawing in a breath, and having to hold it until he released his too.

After a few moments, George felt his breathing go back to normal, and he cautiously opened his eyes. In front of him was Clay, and he had his hands on George's shoulders. He was staring at him in concern, his green eyes staring straight into his own brown ones.

"That's it, George." Clay said, his voice low and calm and patient. George took one more deep breath. He looked around, and realised he was on a bench. He didn't remember getting here either. He looked on the floor and saw he had dropped his icecream a few feet away, where he had stopped walking. He didn't want the rest of it anyway.

He looked back at Clay and swallowed, his face blushing when he realised how close they were sitting, and also with embarrassment.

"Are you ok?" Clay asked, dropping one hand so only one remained on George's shoulder. George nodded.

"I'm s-so sorry, Clay. I-I have no idea what...." George trailed off.

"It's ok, George. I think it was a panic attack. Do you know what might have set it off?" Clay asked. George nodded. "What did you mean by 'you're not cut out for this'?" Clay asked. George stared at his feet trying to think of something.

"We're you talking about school or something? Are you worried about your parents being mad?" Clay asked. George slowly looked back up, nodding.

"Yeah... yeah. I don't want to face my parents." George said. Clay smiled kindly, patting his shoulder.

"I'm sure it'll be ok, George. If you explain to them how overwhelmed you were and also maybe that you had a panic attack they might be understanding." Clay said. George nodded.

"Sorry you had to deal with me." George mumbled.

"Don't apologise, it's perfectly fine. Do you get panic attacks often?" Clay asked.

George wondered how Clay knew so much about them, and how to calm him down.

"Yeah. Sometimes. When I feel myself begin to panic, I start freaking out about not being able to breathe, which makes me panic more than the actual thing. I have a sort of fear of not being able to breathe. I guess my panic attacks happen after nightmares usually." George said.

"Nightmares? How often do you get nightmares." Clay said.

"Only... only sometimes." George said. But he lied. He gets nightmares almost every time he sleeps. And they almost always have to do with being GNotFound. He's had nightmares about villains hurting people he loves, or about him failing, the whole city getting destroyed, Blade returning and killing him and Dream. Even nightmares about getting exposed, and everyone realising how unfit he is to be GNotFound.

But luckily George doesn't sleep enough to get nightmares every night.

"I get nightmares too." Clay admitted.

## Chapter End Notes

CW// panic attack

There are so many helplines and ways you can get help. Please do not think you have no options xx

# So we are both grounded

## Chapter Summary

George has his rescheduled therapy appointment, and prays that there are no supervillain interruptions to his school day.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"George, long time no see." Phil said. George gave him a small, unenthusiastic smile back.

"Sorry, Mr Phil. I've been super busy, especially with school." George said, opening up his bag.

"Don't apologise, George. It's only been around ten days since we properly chatted. Although I did see you briefly last monday but there was a red alert. But it's not like you have any requirements to come here. Got more jewellery this time?" Phil said, leaning his forearms on the glass cabinet. George nodded, pulling out multiple.

"I thought I'd bring a couple more today." He said, laying them out for Phil to look at.

Phil picked up the black one first. This was the villain that could morph into the person they touch and say the name of.

"Black onyx." Phil said, putting down the ring. He then picked up the brown earring from the memory erasing villain. It took him a second.

"I'm pretty sure this is andalusite." He said, gently placing it back down again. He looked at the cloudy coloured bracelet and hummed.

"Moonstone." He said. George nodded, that makes sense. It was the jewel that turned the villain into a wolf. He's heard about the legends attached to this stone from movies and Tv shows.

"This one is definitely amber." Phil said, pointing to the necklace that the woman with fire had.

Finally, Phil picked up the blue ring, the one the shapeshifter from the weekend had. When George first saw it, he was extremely confused, thinking it was sapphire. But that theory was quickly squashed when the person had a different power.

That further established George's assumption that there is only one special jewel of each kind.

"Lapis lazuli." Phil smiled, placing it back down. "Your relatives sure had quite the array of gems. Would you like boxes for these too?" He asked. George nodded, fiddling with his bag strap.

That was a lot of supervillains in only ten days.

As Phil left with the jewellery to fit the boxes, George pulled out his phone.

## Pandas

You free tonight? The gang wants

to go see a movie or something

**George**

I'm grounded, remember?

**Pandas**

Yeeeah. But there's a thing called  
a window

George sighed. After he had ditched the appointment yesterday, his parents were in fact furious. He told them he just wasn't up for it, and they didn't take it as good enough.

*"George, we know you have a lot going on at the moment and you're overwhelmed, but that was the point of the appointment." Lorna had told him.*

*"And then you proceeded to ditch the entire rest of the school day. You said you were going to try." His dad said. George felt insanely guilty. He would have felt less guilty if he had actually been saving the city. But he didn't even do that. Sure, he went to that one girl, but then he proceeded to intentionally skip school to hang out with Clay.*

Safe to say, George was grounded. He was either at school or at home. No inbetween. This little trip to the jewellery store was no exception. But his parents didn't know.

Phil returned with the boxes and George put them all carefully in his bag.

"Thanks, Mr Phil." George said.

"I'll see you next time, George." Phil smiled, and waved as George left the store.

George walked to school in back to the reception. He had his fingers crossed the whole morning that there would be no red alerts. He really can't afford to miss this rescheduled appointment.

He went up to the receptionist, who frowned when she saw him. *So she does remember me.*

"Take a seat Mr Davidson. Dr Puffy will be out in a few minutes." She said in a stern voice. George nodded and took a seat.

He felt a buzzing and saw Nick was calling him, so he picked it up and spoke quietly.

"Nick?" He said, glancing at the receptionist.

"Gogyyyy where are you." Nick said.

"I have that rescheduled appointment with the guidance councillor." George said.

"Oh, right. Forgot. I miss you George, you better be there at lunch or I'll throw a tantrum." Nick said, and George laughed softly.

"Like a Tommy tantrum?"

"Worse."

George looked up and saw a woman standing at the door to the room. She had brown hair and a very kind smile.

"George?" She asked.

"See you at lunch, Nick." George said quickly, hanging up. He stood up and nodded and she smiled and gestured for him to follow. As he followed, he realised how much shorter she was.

She led him to a room that had *Dr. Cara Puffy* on the door, and he followed her inside.

Inside was not what George was expecting. There was a desk, and a computer and a chair, but that was off to one side of the room. In the middle was some beanbags, different colours. There was a number of what looked like toys in a box on a table between the beanbags.

George raised an eyebrow at the childish room.

"Ok, George, choose a beanbag, I'll just be one second." She said, going over to her desk. George looked at the number of beanbags, and instinctively chose the blue one, pulling it towards the glass table and cautiously sitting down on it.

He felt like a kid, especially when his eyes looked into the box of various toys.

"Um, not to be rude, but why does this room seem like it's for kids? You work at a high school." George said. Dr Puffy smiled from her desk, as she grabbed an iPad and a pen that writes on it.

She came over and sat in the beanbag on the other side of the table to George. George guessed it was red.

"I think it's nice to act like a kid sometimes, you know? Instead of pretending to be a grownup or be someone others want to be." She said, tapping on her tablet.

"Right... but what about the toys?" He asked, pointing at the box. She looked up.

"Those are fidget toys. A bunch of things you can fiddle with while we talk if you want, but only if you want." She said. George shook his head.

"Ok, George. Let's start of with introductions. I'm Dr Puffy but I think that's too formal. So you can either call me Cara or Puffy, whatever you prefer." She said, smiling expectantly at George.

"Um. Ok." He said, adjusting himself nervously in the beanbag.

"So I see here that you have to attend at least 5 appointments with me. Part of the attendance policy. That's fine. I will just run through what these appointments involve real quick. So basically, anything that we talk about here is completely private. There are two ways information can leave this room and that is either you, voluntarily telling anyone. Or two, me having to tell someone."

"Reasons for when I may have to tell someone includes whether I believe you or another student is in some sort of danger. Or if you are having thoughts of suicide, if you self-harm, or if I am told of any illegal activity such as substance abuse. I am telling you this not to try and deter you from speaking to me, but so that I can be as open and honest as I can. The reason I must tell someone about those things is because I, as one high school councillor, cannot supply you the help you may need. Things like that involve multiple people and safety ropes to assist you. Such as a psychiatrist. I don't want to lie to you, I'm being as honest as I can." She said.

All George could do was nod.

"These appointments are to be used however you want. We can just focus on attendance, or you can use them as time to talk about things you may not get to tell anyone else." She said. George

nodded again.

"Great. So, I know this might start of a little bit awkward since I can't imagine you are used to sharing personal things with people you just met. But tell me a bit about yourself, George. What are you looking forward to about after high school? Are you planning on going college? What's your favourite subjects? Any hobbies?" She asked. George started fiddling with his fingers. He hates these conversations.

"Um, yeah I want to go to college. I was thinking maybe something in coding, since that's my favourite subject, computer science. Um. I don't know, I don't really have time for hobbies."

"Computer science, that is very cool. You don't have time for hobbies? What hobbies would you like to do if you did have time?" She asked.

"Um, I haven't really thought about it." He said.

"Any sport? Or music? Maybe some exercise? Reading? Art?" She asked.

"I don't know." George replied. She smiled.

"That's ok. What about your friends? Do you hang out with them?" She asked.

"Yeah, sometimes."

"What do you do with them?"

"Um. Sometimes go bowling, or to the movies, or to each other's houses. Sometimes I play video games with them." He shrugged.

The session went like that for a while. Puffy kept asking questions trying to get to know George, or at least get him comfortable, or to open up. But the boy wasn't replying with much detail, and he continued to fiddle with his fingers instead of a toy.

"So, you know why you're here George. It's to work with your attendance. What do you do when you miss class?" She asked. George shrugged again.

"I don't know. I go home, or to the mall, get food." He lied. It was the only reasonable lie he could think of rather than admitting to jumping on rooftops with a masked man and a bow.

"You know, they almost didn't pull you up in your attendance. You may have the worst in the grade, but you are passing all your subjects. You're not doing as well as you used to, but you aren't failing anything. That's interesting, hmm?" She said.

George shrugged again. He has been doing that a lot this session.

"How do you keep up with the work?" Puffy asked.

"I catch up at home after school. Or ask a friend what happened in class." George said.

"How much time would you say you spend catching up?" She asked.

"Um, maybe a few hours a day." He said, which was the truth.

"Does that include working on assignments and studying for exams? Or purely on catching up on missed class work."

"Probably just the stuff I missed, trying to teach it to myself. I also have to work on assignments and stuff."

"This might be a difficult question to answer, but why do you sometimes miss class?" She asked. George sighed.

"I don't know. I just don't like school."

"But you spend more time catching up on school than you would if you just went to class. Is that the real reason?" She asked.

"I don't know." George said stubbornly.

"Is it the environment at school? Is everyone nice to you?" She asked.

"I'm not being bullied."

"Ok, so it's not the people. You don't find the work overly difficult." She said. George nodded.

"You just don't know why?"

"Schools just exhausting. I'm just exhausted." George said, getting annoyed at this conversation. Puffy could tell these questions were getting to him.

"How much sleep do you get, George?" She asked.

"Like, a week?" He asked. She nodded, and he did some math in his head. "Maybe... 20 hours a week? Yeah, that seems right." He said. She nodded and wrote on her tablet.

"So about 3 hours a day?" She checked, trying to hide her concern, but the raised eyebrow gave it away. He shrugged.

"Well, sometimes it's like 4 hours, sometimes 1, you know, it changes." He said, and she nodded again.

"You probably know the amount of sleep you *should* be getting, right?" She asked.

"Something like 6-7 hours a day?" He asked.

"Actually, for teenagers, you at least need 8-10 hours of sleep a night." She said. George's eyes went wide.

"70 hours a week? Who are these people." He said, and she chuckled slightly.

"How about eating?" She asked. George thought about it.

"I don't eat breakfast. I usually eat like a muesli bar or something I bring to school for lunch. But I usually get dinner at home." He said. Sometimes he doesn't even get to eat dinner, and tells his parents he ate out with friends.

"Hm, a lot of teenagers skip breakfast nowadays, but I would recommend either breakfast or lunch be more integrated into your routine." She said.

Puffy didn't want to point out how George claimed he ditched school to get food elsewhere.

"Your sleep is a bit too low for my liking, George. Do you know if there is any reason as to why?" She asked.

"I mean, I catch up on schoolwork at night." He said.

"So school finishes at 3, do you go home at that time?"

"Yeah, Mom picks me up, and I'm usually home by 3:15."

"Ok, so you get home, and then what? School work?"

"Yeah."

"How long do you do schoolwork for?"

"Until dinner." George said, getting bored of this conversation.

"Do you relax? Do more schoolwork?"

"I play video games with my friends sometimes. Or yeah, I study until I fall asleep."

"What time do you usually fall asleep?"

"I try to aim for 3am. Wake up 6." George said with a sigh. These questions were bothering him, because he had to lie on too many of them.

"You're telling me that you study from 3pm to 3am, only to break for dinner and a bit of video games?" Puffy asked.

George slowly nodded.

"Yeah..."

"You spend double the amount of time doing school work than you actually spend *at* school." She said.

The more George thought about it, the more he realised how ridiculous his lie was getting. He didn't spend that much time on schoolwork.

He doesn't even know *what* he does at night when he can't sleep.

"Ok... well, our session is almost over. I'm going to go further into that next week. But until then, I'm going to give you a bit of homework.

"Homework?" He raised an eyebrow.

"I know you're swamped with stuff, but this will be good. The first thing I want us to work on is-"

"Puffy, I can't fix my sleep or school habits yet. It's the only way I've been keeping up with everything. And I can't just change that in a week. I also can't just find a hobby, I have no time for that!" George jumped in. Puffy smiled patiently.

"I know that. That's why this week, I just want you to eat lunch. I know it sounds dumb, and you already eat something small. But I want you to have a complete meal, and I want you to have it in the cafeteria with your friends. How does that sound?" She asked.

George looked perplexed. She was asking him... to eat? Out of all his issues, and everything she was grilling him about. She choose his *lunch*.



"Um. Ok, I guess I can do that." George said, and Puffy smiled and stood up.

"Excellent. I'll see you next Monday morning." She grinned. George stood up too, and she opened the door for him.

"What class do you have now?" She asked.

"History." He answered.

"Have fun." She said, waving him goodbye. George put on a fake smile and waved back, before disappearing down the hall.

His smile fell and he took a deep breath.

*That was awful*

•

When George got to history, he was slightly late.

"Davidson, why are you late?" Mr Bell asked. George handed him a note that the receptionist gave him to excuse him. Mr Bell peered at it with his glasses, then nodded.

"Ok, take a seat."

George turned and saw Clay sitting right in front of him. Clay looked exhausted too, but he gave George a smile which George attempted to return.

As George walked down the middle aisle of the class, past his classmates, he heard someone get up and he saw Clay had stood up as he walked past.

George turned back around and kept walking, shaking his head as if it wasn't real.

Clay sat down at the same time George did at the back, and the teacher didn't even notice. George saw Wilbur, Karl and Fundy look back though, at Clay. But they faced forward again after a moment.

"Hi." Clay whispered. They had to be quiet in this class.

"Hi?" George replied, now looking at Clay. But his eyes went wide when he saw his face.

"What happened? Your cheek..." George said, fighting the urge to touch the dark bruise forming on his friend's cheek just under his eye.

"Huh? Oh, soccer training yesterday." Clay said, waving off the concern. "Did you have your appointment?" Clay asked. George nodded.

"Yep." George laughed in pain, making Clay frown.

"That bad?"

"It just wasn't the best. How was everything with, um, your father? If you want to talk about, you don't have to but if you want." George asked, treading lightly. Clay sighed.

"Um, well, not very good either. He got quite mad. Sometimes he just has meltdowns." Clay said with a shrug, but George noticed he was chewing the inside of his cheek.

George has witnessed Mayor Block's explosions first-hand. He can't imagine what it would be like to get one of those, as his *son*.

"He got that mad at you?" George asked.

"Yeah. So mad. He screamed for hours. I just sat there. I mean, I've learnt that anytime I try and explain myself, he just gets louder. So I just take it now, it's easier." Clay said. George felt his heart break.

"That's awful." George whispered. Clay looked at him.

"No, it's fine. He's a good dad, really." Clay assured him. George doubted that. But maybe he's a better Dad than he is a Mayor. He didn't notice Clay's hand briefly brush the bruise on his cheek.

"What about your parents?" Clay asked, clearing his throat and opening his laptop.

"I'm grounded."

"Twining." Clay whispered back, and both boys weakly smiled at each other.

"Yeah they were pretty disappointed." George sighed.

"Well, the principal talked with my Dad after I ran out and she said I had to have the same sessions with the guidance councillor, like you. But father refused, saying I didn't need to see a shrink. I'm a young man and didn't need to talk about my feelings to grow up. Said discipline is the best way." Clay sighed.

"Oh." George said, in shock.

"Yeah. So instead of the sessions, father just kind of threatened my freedom. Which makes sense. If I take time out of my education for leisure, then he takes time from leisure for my education. Can't really get mad at that. Except I have to drop out of the soccer team. Yesterday was my last training session." Clay said.

"Out of the soccer team? That's so unfair." George said with furrowed eyebrows.

"Actually, I don't mind the soccer team bit. I enjoyed it, and I was good at it, but I didn't show up enough. I was going to get kicked off anyways." Clay said with a sigh.

From the outside, it seemed like both teenagers got justifiable punishments for ditching school. But if everyone knew what they were actually doing with their time, they wouldn't hesitate to even let them drop out of school completely.

The world can be unfair at times.

•

"Thank god, I've missed you Gogy." Nick said when George arrived at lunch, giving him a hug and squeezing the life out of him.

"It hasn't been that long." George said, prying himself off Nick at sitting at the table, where Quackity, Darryl and Skeppy already were.

"It's been since friday. You didn't hang out with me on the weekend and yesterday you disappeared for some reason, and got grounded for it." Nick said, sitting down beside George and staring at him.

"How long are you grounded for?" Darryl asked.

"I don't know. A week or two I guess." George shrugged. He noticed they were all eating lunch. Darryl had a sandwich, Skeppy had some leftover pizza. Nick had some pasta like usual and Quackity got the school burger.

"That sucks. Now you can't hang out with us tonight even if you wanted to." Quackity said.

"I do want to." George defended himself.

"It's a pity you had to leave bowling. You missed me winning." Skeppy said, puffing out his chest. George narrowed his eyes, turning to Nick.

"Nick told me that he won." George said, and Nick laughed nervously.

"Well he's a liar and a little bitch." Skeppy said, kicking Nick under the table.

"Language! Geppy!" Darryl said.

"I'm not a little bitch. The game was rigged against me. I would have won." Nick said. George laughed and rolled his eyes.

"So anyway, George. Surely come to the movie theatre with us." Quackity said.

"I can't, guys."

"Just sneak out. It's worth it." Nick said.

"I mean, he is grounded..." Darryl said quietly. Skeppy nudged him in the side.

"But we want him to come! How much more in trouble can he get?" He said. George shook his head.

"My parents are already being quite lenient. I don't want to make things worse or break their trust. I'll hang out as soon as I'm ungrounded, I promise."

"We will hold you to that promise, Gogy." Nick said, poking him in his arm.

•

"Hey, George. Could you help me with this part. It says syntax error but I don't understand what I did wrong." Xavier said. George turned and looked at his code.

"Umm." George said, as he leaned over and took Xavier's mouse, scrolling slightly to look at the code above the error. "Ok, found it." He said, typing on the keyboard and fixing the code.

"Thank you! Man, that was taking me forever." Xavier said as George leaned away.

"No problem." He smiled, turning back to his own code.

"I'm helpless with this. I have barely done any of my code, and I keep getting errors." Xavier sighed.

"You'll get the hang of it eventually. It just takes practise." George said.

"Yeah, but I always have to ask Mr Parker questions every single lesson. I can't work on it at home

because I have no one to ask." He sighed. George hummed, and Xavier glanced at him, nervously fiddling with his hoodie strings.

"Do you think maybe you could tutor me? You don't have to, but like maybe once a week we can work on the project together and we can help each other. Well, it'll probably be more you helping me, but I can try motivating you." Xavier said. George looked at the hopeful blonde boy.

"I would, but I barely have any extra time for myself. And I'm grounded." George said, with a frown.

"That's ok, you don't have to. Especially if you're grounded. I just find I'm more motivated to do schoolwork if people around me are. No biggy, I'll just pester Mr Parker." Xavier laughed. George bit his lip.

"I'm sorry. I really would if I had time. I work better like that too, with people." George said.

"Don't stress George." Xavier sent him a kind smile, before returning to his code.

George chewed on his lip as he thought. Maybe tutoring would be a good enough reason to leave the house, since he's grounded. Plus, Xavier was nice, George wanted some more friends.

"You know what, how about I see when I'm free and we can organise sometime this week. My parents might let me because it's for school. Just once can't hurt." George said. Xavier turned to him with a big smile.

"Really? Don't feel like you have to though."

"No, I want to." George smiled back.

"Could I get your number then? So we can text?" Xavier asked, holding out his phone. George nodded and typed in his digits, before handing the device back. Xavier sent George a quick message so he also had his number.

"Thanks so much George. I'll pay you too, for tutoring me if you want."

"No, no way. It'll be helping me too. It's just a study group." George said immediately.

"At least let me buy you ice-cream or coffee sometimes as thanks." Xavier said, and George laughed with a shrug.

•

George was grinning when he got into the car at the end of the day.

*I went a whole day at school with no interruptions.*

"You look happy. How was the appointment?" His Mom asked. George's smile fell and he sighed.

"It was lame."

"What did you guys talk about?"

"She just asked me questions about my sleep and diet and stuff. And like what I'm interested in and my hobbies."

"Do you think it'll be useful?" Lorna asked. They were both sitting in the car waiting for Lexi to

arrive.

"Useful for what." George scoffed.

"For your attendance issues, George. To figure out why you are skipping so much since you won't tell us a good enough reason." Lorna said.

"I said I'm just exhausted and schools boring." George replied, reciting the same ineffective sentence. Lorna sighed and looked at her son.

"I'm trying really hard to understand, George. And I'm trying not to get angry, like most parents would."

"You grounded me."

"Yes, because you need to focus on attending school and not other things. I hope you can see that your father and I are being very patient and trying to understand what's wrong."

"Nothings wrong."

"You broke down and cried to us, baby. Its ok if there is something wrong, everyone goes through difficult parts of their life. But you should talk to us, or to Dr Puffy at least." Lorna said. George looked away, out the car window.

"I'm managing just fine, though. I'm still passing everything."

"Just because you appear to be managing, doesn't mean everything is ok. What's going on in here..." She taps George's temple. "Is more important to us than your grades."

George looked down at his feet and kicked them together.

"I wish you would talk to us more George." She said softly.

"I talk." He said.

"I mean tell us things. I feel like you keep secrets. And that's fine, it's your life, you're entitled to privacy. But we are your family, and we love you and want to know what's going on in your life." She said.

George looked up at his Mom and swallowed.

"What if I tell you something and it changes things? Like changes what you think of me, changes *who* you think I am." She reached over and ran her fingers through his hair, like she always did when George was younger.

Lexi opened the door and jumped into the backseat.

"You're my George. Nothing can change how much I love you." Lorna said to George, who smiled slightly in response. "If there is something you want to tell us, just know we will be here to listen." She kissed him on the forehead, and George smiled slightly.

"Ew. Affection." Lexi said. Lorna turned to her daughter in the back seat, and grabbed her hand, pulling her forward and kissed her hand. Lexi squealed and pulled her hand away.

"Mom!"

"Love you too, Lexi Loo." Lorna smiled, turning back to the wheel and beginning to drive away.

George returned to looking out the window.

*I'm not who she thinks I am.*

Chapter End Notes

Stan Lorna

# Flashback again

## Chapter Summary

The second flashback to a year ago when George and Clay both fight their first villain together

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### ONE YEAR AGO

"Ok, I have the best plan to get rid of them. I have a lighter-"

"Nick! No!" George yelled. Nick stared at him, a pout on his face.

"But.... arson..."

"You are not setting fire to the two freshman, no matter how bloody annoying they may be." George said as they walked to their lunch table.

As they entered the cafeteria, they could already see five people sitting at their table. On one side, Quackity and Skeppy sat, arms crossed and glaring at the two freshman across from them, who George didn't even know the names of. But the two kids were sitting there with grins on their faces. Darryl was standing at the end of the table, his hands in his hair.

George and Nick went over and sat down on the same side as Quackity and Skeppy, mimicking their posture and glaring at the children.

"So we meet again." The brunette said.

"Guys we can all sit at the table, it's just a table." Darryl said.

"No way. These middle schoolers don't deserve it. We have been here since freshman." Skeppy said, jabbing a finger in the blonde one's chest.

"We are not fucking middle schoolers." He said back.

"Language!" Darryl said.

"Scram, kids. You've been here for a week. Just leave." George said.

"No." The brunette said.

"You're literally children, your voices are still squeaky for fucks sake."

"Quackity!" Darryl interrupted.

"At least we aren't a junior with a little girls voice." The blonde one said to Quackity. Quackity stood up and walked around to the other side of the table and grabbed the collar of the red and white shirt, pulling the kid to his feet.

Except the kid was 6ft, and Quackity didn't realise.

"Now who's the child." The blonde smirked, and Quackity's growled. Darryl ran over and grabbed Quackity's arm, trying to pull him away.

"I'll fucking roll you." Quackity said.

"Ok, Big Q, calm down." George said slowly, standing up. This has gotten more intense than he expected.

Quackity shoved the kid in the chest, and the tall blonde was going to retaliate, but his brunette friend pulled his arm to stop him.

"Woah, woah." George said. Nick had rolled up his sleeves, walking over beside Quackity. Darryl was standing between them.

The blonde kicked out his foot and it hit Quackity's shin, who pulled away from Darryl and was going to charge at the freshman.

"Hijo de puta, te voy a arrancar la cabeza y te voy a arrastrar al suelo, jodido niño-" Quackity began to yell.

"Quackity!" George yelled, running around and putting himself between the junior and freshman, holding Quackity back.

"What is going on here?" A voice interrupted them, and they all turned to look into the eyes of Mrs Arley. George immediately let go of Quackity, and everyone stopped.

"They started it." The brunette kid was quick to point fingers at the group of juniors.

"Nuh uh, these freshies took our table!" Skeppy responded.

"I'll have you know that I am a *minor* and you-" The blonde started, but they were all interrupted again by George's math teacher, who he has had the misfortune of having for the past two years. He just prays he doesn't get her for senior.

"Detention. All of you. Maybe you'll figure out your little quarrel at 3pm today." She said, walking away.

The juniors all slowly turned to the freshman. The brunette was smiling and the blonde was smirking.

"Look what you've done." Nick said.

"It's just detention. Maybe you'll learn how awesome we are and let us sit here."

"Not a chance."

•

George was late to detention. He had gym last and had to get changed back into his normal clothes. When he got changed, he had to re-tuck his pendant back beneath his shirt. He got it two days ago, and hasn't taken it off. There's been no reason to transform yet, but honestly, the waiting was making him feel anxious. Maybe it was all just a dream.

George ran down the halls, trying to find his way to detention, but he rounded a corner too quickly



and ran straight into something, no, someone. And both parties fell to the floor.

George groaned and clutched his head, but he looked up at the boy he had run in to. He too, was holding his forehead, but looked at George.

"I am so sorry." George said, standing up and holding out a hand. The boy winced, but smiled and accepted the offer of help.

As he stood up, George was immediately taken aback. The boy was several inches taller than him. His hair was slightly wavy, and quite long as he ran a hand through it, sweeping it to one side out of his face. His bright eyes looked down at George, they must be green. George felt his heart flutter as he took in the appearance of the beautiful boy in front of him, the one with the gorgeous smile.

"I'm sorry too." He said, his voice deep and sweet, sending chills down George's spine. George was frozen as he looked at him.

"Wh- no- it wasn't your fault- I wasn't looking." George said, and furrowed his eyebrows at his stuttering. He doesn't stutter that much.

"Neither was I. Hey, are you in my math class? You seem familiar." He said. George thought about it. He thought he would remember a face like his.

Although he did look and sound very familiar.

"I don't think so. Is your teacher Mrs Arley?" George asked. The boy nodded and George was consumed by confusion.

"O-oh. I'm sorry. I-I didn't realise we have been in the same class, since- I... I guess since last year?" George questioned. It was after winter break, and George has been a junior for over half a year. How has he not recognised his classmate?

"Oh, I'm new. I've only been here a few days, and we've only had one math class. Plus, I sat at the back." The boy said. George slowly nodded. He barely pays attention in math.

"I'm Clay." The blonde said, holding out his hand. George stared at it for a moment.

Clay. Clay? That name rang a bell. And his face... his face was so awfully familiar. And his *voice*.

"W-wait. I think I do know you." George said, mostly thinking out loud. Clay's hand was still extended.

"Oh. Um, well, I am the mayor's son, if that helps." Clay laughed nervously. Then it hit George. Clay Block, of course. He looked just like his father on Tv. His Mom said his son was starting in his grade.

That still doesn't explain why his voice is familiar.

Clay's hand was still out in front of him, waving slightly to remind George. George hesitantly shook it.

"Well? What's your name?" Clay laughed.

"G-George." He spluttered out. Clay grinned and let go. "You're David Block's son? But... you seem so... and he seems so...." Clay grimaced.

"My father isn't very warm." Clay said, assuming what George was going to say.

"Wait, I didn't mean-"

"It's ok, I know what you meant. I swear I'm not like him though. I know I kind of look like him, but I'm not that...." Clay drifted off, the awkward silence filling between them.

"Shit. I have detention." George's eyes widened when he realised.

"Oh. I'll see you around? In math?" Clay said. George nodded, feeling his cheeks warm, and he ran away from Clay, down the hall.

When he reached detention, he was bright red and panting. Mrs Arley chastised him for being late then got him to sit down in one of the chairs. He saw all his friends and the freshman here, all separated by a desk between.

George sat in the chair two over from Nick.

"Why are you late?"

"Gym?" George said, his answer coming out unsure since it was a half lie.

"Alright now that you are all here, I want you to settle this argument you had earlier." She said.

"No way in hell am I letting these fucking freshmen sit with us!" Quackity yelled immediately. Mrs Arley glared at him.

"No yelling. No swearing. If you don't think you can have a civilised conversation, you will sit here for the next two hours in silence." She said.

"Well we don't want to sit with you wankers either." The blonde freshman said to Quackity.

"That's it. Silence. Not until you think you can have a mature conversation like the young adults you are." She said, and everyone went quiet, glaring at each other.

The silence lasted a while. George had stopped being worn out from sprinting, but his cheeks were still red as he recounted his conversation with Clay.

"Are you that unfit?" Nick whispered to George.

"No." He whispered back.

"Then why are you still red."

"I'm in trouble, Nick." George said, turning to look at his friend in the eyes. Nick raised an eyebrow.

"Trouble?"

"Yes, trouble. I met someone." George whispered back, putting his head in his hands.

"Someone?" Nick whispered suggestively. George nodded and Nick giggled with glee, earning a harsh shush from the teacher.

"Who is he?"

"Shut up."

"Hell no."

"It's the mayor's son." George said, cringing at his words.

"No way."

"Fuck. He's pretty." George whispered.

"Oh my God. Gogy has a crush."

"No, I don't. I just thought he was nice to look at. Doesn't mean I like him and his stupid father. I'm not allowing myself to get all obsessed over someone I barely know." George said.

"You're going to fall in love."

"No way in hell. I refuse to talk to him. I will just admire him from a distance." George said. Nick shook his head.

"No way. I'm calling it now, this is how it's going to go. You're going to ignore the pretty boy. But you'll obsess over him for ages. Soon you'll become friends, your crush tearing you up inside. But then he'll fall in love too. And you'll get together and get married and have babies."

"I'm a guy, I can't have babies."

"Adopt."

"No way, I don't want kids. They are sticky and annoying."

"Whatever. That's beside the point."

"You're just plain wrong, Nick." George shook his head, looking out of the window.

Detention was still awfully quiet. The teacher was at the front, clicking on her laptop while the students all glared at each other.

"Ok, I'll be back. I need to get something important from the staff room. Don't move. Don't argue. I want to come back to either complete and utter silence, or a resolution. Whoever is at fault will stay in detention for the next hour and a half." She threatened, and then left.

The second she left, both Quackity and the blonde freshman jumped to their feet, glaring at each other.

"Ok, ok. Let's just settle this calmly." Darryl said, getting between them.

"I'm not going to be fucking calm, he landed us in detention! You fucking imbecile." Quackity spat.

"QUACKITY SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN OR I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU SIT DOWN."

Darryl yelled, and everyone was shocked. Quackity immediately sat down, and Darryl turned to the blonde, who also sat down next to his friend.

"Ok. First of all. We will have the juniors voice why they don't want freshman at the table. And then the freshmen will go. Ok? You get two minutes." Darryl said, pointing at his friends.

"Aren't you on our side, Darryl?" Nick asked.

"Someone has to be the mediator." He said.

"Ok, fine. These little twigs have taken our space. We've sat there since freshman." Skeppy said.

"Yeah and they think they own the fucki- sorry, the flipping place." Quackity said, censoring himself when he saw Darryl's glare.

"Yeah. They are annoying and weird and interrupt us." Nick added.

His friends all turned to George. "I mean... they are quite loud." George added, since everything had already been said.

"Ok. Now you two." Darryl said, turning to the freshmen.

"We have names."

"I don't think they do." Quackity said with a shrug.

"Well, it's not like we like you guys either. But we have nowhere else to sit. And sitting with juniors looks cool. No one will mess with us." The brunette said.

"Yeah. Please just let us sit with you. We won't be too much of a nuisance. You know what, I'll even bring women." The blonde said.

"Women?" George asked.

"I know all the women."

"We don't want you to bring women, we want you to piss off." Nick said.

"I have a proposal, if you will." The brunette freshman said, standing up. "You let us sit at the table with you. And we will take the blame for the argument. We will stick out the rest of detention and you guys can go. Also we won't annoy you anymore, just sit peacefully at the table." The brunette said.

The juniors looked at each other. It was an intriguing offer, they had stuff they wanted to do rather than sit here forever.

"Ok. Deal." George was the first to say, standing up and holding out his hand. The blonde stood up and shook his hand.

"I'm Tommy." He grinned.

"George. This is Nick, Darryl, Skeppy and Quackity." George said, but Quackity still seemed slightly ticked off.

"I remember you, George, from last week." Tommy said, as he let go of George's hand. George tilted his head to the side in confusion.

"Last week?"

"There was a villain after school and you pushed me out of the way of a falling tree. It was quite poggery, so thank you. Prick." Tommy said, adding the insult to not appear soft. George chuckled.

"Oh yeah. No worries. Prick."

"I'm Toby but everyone calls me Tubbo." The brunette chimed in cheerfully.

When Mrs Arley arrived back, she was quite confused to see the freshmen offer to do the rest of the detention themselves, so that the juniors could go. Seems like her leaving was the best choice. She only kept the freshmen back for another twenty minutes though, before letting them go too.

•

"Look at the news!" Someone in George's english class called out. It was a few days after the detention. Everyone pulled out their phones, going to live news articles. George glanced at Nick beside him, before also searching on his phone.

"Everyone focus please." The teacher said, annoyed.

"Holy crap it's a giant!" Someone said.

George looked at the live news feed, sure enough, there was what looked like a giant creature. It was taller than the city's buildings, with horns on its head. It had some features of a human, but looked like a monster. It was like something out of a movie.

The school lockdown bell started going off, and the teacher groaned, gesturing for them all to sit at the back of the room, while she went and locked the door and closed the windows.

Nick was grinning in excitement. He always liked the stories of villains, thought it was so cool. Both him and George went to the back of the room.

"Ok, I'm sure this lockdown is temporary. Most likely until authorities can clear the school, and you all can go home if it's safe." The teacher said.

"Miss, what if they can't kill the giant?" Someone asked.

"We may have to evacuate some areas if it can't be controlled soon." The teacher shrugged.

George felt sick to the stomach. His hand went to his chest, where he felt the bump of his pendant.

*Forget it. I can't actually do anything. It's a fucking giant.*

George was riddled with guilt. L chose him to be the Sapphire. They chose him to stop this madness, to be the city's saviour. To stop more people from getting hurt.

But George had never done it before. How could L know he could do it? Who thought George Davidson would be the best person for this? Awkward, nerdy, weak, George.

Everyone was sitting on the floor at the back of the room, but they were all on their phones. George was sitting there debating on what to do. He could get killed. Or mess up. He could get exposed and become the laughing stock of the school, of the city. He could die.

But other people could get hurt if he doesn't help.

"Does this mean time off school?" Nick asked with a big grin on his face. George pulled his knees to his chest.

"I don't know." He said. Nick looked at his friend and frowned.

"Are you ok?"

"Yeah, of course." George said. Nick narrowed his eyes.

"I'm sure the authorities will handle it. They won't let the giant come near the schools. Everything will be fine." Nick said, trying to reassure George. But George was off another world.

Nick pulled up a photo and zoomed in on it. George glanced over and scoffed when he saw what it was. Nick looked back up.

"What?"

"You've been obsessed with that the past two days." George said, gesturing to the photo.

"Well, duh. This mysterious blue figure appears on the top of a building but disappears? Everyone thought it was a villain but no way, they didn't even do anything." Nick said. George looked back at the photo, of him.

"Who do you think they are then?" George asked.

"I think it's a superhero. It makes sense right? Where there is supervillains, there is superheroes." Nick said. George looked away. Well he wasn't being much of a superhero right now.

"Well, at least I hope they are. This city needs someone like them." Nick added. George felt more guilt strike his heart.

But he was stuck. Not just physically, but he was also emotionally torn between what to do.

Half an hour later, the school was evacuated, everyone allowed to go home since the giant was on the other side of the city. Some parents had come to pick up their kids, but George got a text from his Mom and Dad saying they couldn't leave, their work places were still in lockdown.

"Holy fuck. Look at this!" Nick said to George, holding up his phone as they waited out the front of the school.

It was a live broadcast of the giant, but the camera was now focused on someone new. A green man with a sword, who was jumping from building to building.

George felt even more sick.

"It's a superhero! I know it!" Nick said.

"George!" A girls voice interrupted them, and Lexi came jogging over. She looked at Nick and scoffed.

"What's he doing here?" She asked. Nick stuck his tongue out at her.

"Could ask you the same thing, child." He retorted.

"Are your parents coming soon?" George asked Nick, interrupting the childish rivalry. Nick shook his head.

"No, both in lockdown."

"Me too. Hey, I'm going to go to the bathroom real quick, can you watch Lexi?" He said. Nick scowled, giving his sister the side eye.

"I might give her over to the giant." He said. Lexi shoved him.

"George you need better friends. Ones that don't look like the giant." She said. George shook his head and walked away, back towards the school.

But when he was out of sight, he quickly went another way down the street. He needed to help Emerald. He was chosen to help, so he would.

But where could he transform?

He eventually found a small alleyway and decided there was nothing better. He dumped his bag and pulled out his pendent, his hands trembling slightly.

"Mask on." He said, and gasped when the still unfamiliar sensation swept over him.

He looked at the blue material covering his arms and put his hands over the goggles over his eyes. He still couldn't believe this was actually happening.

He took a deep breath and snapped the bow, and then he looked up, deciding to make his way onto the roof. He found the fire escape and made his way up, still unsure of his actual capabilities.

When he was on the roof, he could see the giant from here on the other side of the city. He began to run along the rooftops, and jumped from one to the next like he had the other day.

He couldn't help but smile as the wind blew against his face. There was something so freeing about the whole experience.

When he finally got near the giant, it hadn't seen him yet. But George could see the giant punching the building beside him, where a certain blonde hero was jumping along it.

He almost turned around, his nerves getting in the way.

But George gasped when the giant grabbed the green superhero, and held him in his fist. The guy had dropped his sword and was trying to get out of the grip, but the giant was strong.

George lined up his bow, and an arrow appeared, making his eyes widen in bewilderment. And he aimed and fired.

The arrow sunk into the giant's wrist, and it let go of the superhero, who fell back onto the roof, grabbing his sword and looking over at George.

George shot another arrow, which landed on the giant's shoulder, and it brought its attention to him. The giant bared its teeth at him.

George recalled what the letter from L had said. It said they needed to take supervillain's jewel. So he assessed the giant trying to find a piece of jewellery.

It had a pendent around its neck with a shining jewel in the centre, just like George's Sapphire. Except this jewel was brown.

The giant brought its hand back, and then launched it at George, who only just managed to dive away from the punch. He quickly jumped back onto his feet and ran along the rooftops, the giant following down the street.

He needed to get the pendant somehow. But how can he get close enough?

George didn't know where to go, he reached a dead end. He could see the Emerald guy on the other side of the road on the roof as well, but George didn't know if he could make that jump.

The giant was running at George, a fist ready in the air. He couldn't run back, that would take him closer to the villain.

"Jump!" Emerald called, and George took a deep breath, getting a small run-up, before launching himself across the gap, just as the giant punched where he just was.

George only just made it, his partner pulling him away from the edge further. They both ran along the roof together.

"About time you arrived, *Sapphire*." The green guy said. George scoffed.

"Sorry, I was in lockdown and couldn't get out."

"Whatever. How do we defeat it?" He asked.

"Have you had a chance to read the letter?" George asked, as they jumped over a gap in sync.

"Um. Sure." He lied.

"Oh my god, you didn't. Whatever. We need to take its jewel, which is in its pendant." George explained.

They both turned back to look at the giant, which was throwing things at them.

"How?"

"We need to distract it." George said, in an annoyed tone, as if the answer was obvious.

A particularly large bit of debris was thrown at them. George grabbed his arm and closed his eyes, praying his power actually worked like it implied. He's never done it before.

"Shield..." He said, his voice showing how unsure he was.

There was a loud clang as metal hit something, but George wasn't hurt. He opened his eyes to see that him and Emerald were surrounded by a blue translucent barrier. George reached out to touch it, it was like glass.

He turned to his partner, who's mouth was open in shock.

"Jump, idiot." George said, still holding his arm, and pulled him towards the edge of the roof, where the next street was.

Emerald obeyed, and they both jumped across the gap in the street, George letting his shield go as they landed on the roof over. George rolled his body as he landed, but ended up in a kneeling position, quickly standing up and dusting off his hands.

His partner looked at him with a smirk.

"Why was that kinda..." Emerald said.

"I don't have as long now. We need to use your power." George said, cutting him off. The giant had to go around the block to reach them, they had a little bit of time.



"Ok. What do I do?" He asked, actually sounding serious.

"You create your second you, and then me and you will run around, leading the giant a certain way. Your clone will jump on the giant and take its pendent." George said.

"I don't know how my clone works though. What if it can't do that?"

"What can it do?"

"I don't know!" He exclaimed. George groaned.

"Ok. You will take the jewel then. Me and the clone will run. Got it? Hide behind there." George said, pointing to higher part of a roof.

"Why are you so bossy?" Emerald asked.

"I'm trying to defeat a fucking supervillain!" George said. He rolled his eyes.

"Whatever. Project!" He said, and the copy materialised beside him. He reached out to poke him, but George grabbed his wrist to stop him.

"What are you doing? Remember last time it disappeared when you did that. Go. Quick. The giant's coming." George said.

Emerald nodded and jumped away.

George looked at the projection, which smirked.

"Hello?" George asked.

"Wassup." He said.

"Ok... so you communicate the same." George acknowledged.

"Sure do." He said. George looked over his shoulder at the giant, which saw them. He looked over at where Emerald was hiding.

"Ok. Come on!" George said, and there was a second where the clone wasn't following, until he started running beside George.

They sprinted together, the giant following them and roaring.

George looked at his partner as they passed his hiding spot, and could see the obnoxious wink. George shook his head as he passed.

When the giant also passed where he was hiding, Emerald jumped out onto its shoulder, sword in hand, and George turned in time to see him slash the pendent with his sword, the band cutting in half and the jewel falling to the street.

At the same moment, the giant roared but then disappeared, shrinking extreme quickly.

George skidded to a stop, and the projection did too. His partner was on the road as well, so George jumped to a street post and then landed beside him.

On the ground was a man, in regular clothing. He had a bloodied hand and shoulder from George's arrows. But he was conscious.

George looked at his partner, both of them were panting. But then Emerald smiled, and held out a hand for a fist bump.

George started at it with a raised eyebrow.

"Oh come on now. We just defeated a fucking giant together." He said. George sighed, but fist bumped him.

"Fuck you!" The man on the ground yelled, scrambling to grab his pendent. George ran and scooped it up before him, and Emerald jumped on the man, rolling him onto his stomach, and bringing his hands behind his back.

In the distance, George could hear sirens. And it made him nervous.

"Who are you." George asked. The man spat at his feet.

"None of your business."

"Where did you get this?" George asked, holding up the jewel. The man cackled.

"I'd rather die than tell you. But I'm sure he will be glad to know the precious jewels are in use. Oh yes, he will be so happy. His plan is finally coming together." The man said.

"He's fucking delusional." Emerald scoffed.

Police cars came zooming down the street, and when they arrived, they all came out with guns loaded.

"Put your hands in the air now." They were yelled at. George's eyes went wide in fear.

"Now!" They were yelled at.

"We just defeated the villain. Put him in handcuffs first!" His partner yelled back, still holding the man still.

"All of you. Hands up. Or we shoot." The sergeant said.

George felt a buzzing against his chest and it scared him slightly, but he looked down to see it flash twice. Five minutes, the letter explained.

He slowly put his hands in the air, after slipping the jewel into the pocket in his suit.

"We are here to help. We are here to take down the supervillains. And protect the city." George said calmly. He glanced at his partner and gestured for him to get up too. He made a sound of anger, but got up off the villain and put his hands in the air.

The man took this as his opportunity and jumped up, sprinting away. George in one swift motion, snapped his bow, lined a shot, and hit him in the calf, making him trip and fall.

A gunshot rang through the street, but George dodged it with ease.

"I said we were here to fucking help!" George said.

"You're villains!"

"My power is a blue shield. How can I hurt anyone?" George said. The police all still had their

guns pointed.

Around the corner, the news reporters arrived, filming live. George laughed.

"Listen. I know we are dressed like the villains this city has seen, but we are here to help. To fight supervillains, you need superheroes. And that is what we are. Let us prove to you that we are here to help." George said.

"Who are you?" A reporter asked.

George looked at his partner in panic. What do they say.

"You can call me Dream." The Emerald guy said, flashing a smile and a salute with his hand that was still raised in the air.

He turned to look at George, who gulped and looked at the reported and the cops.

"Um. I'm... G.... GNotFound." He said.

He heard a buzzing beside him and turned to see Dream's pendent buzz twice. He also had five minutes.

"I know we look suspicious. But look, we took down that guy. Next time there is a villain, we will be here to help." George said.

The cops didn't lower their weapons. They all seemed unsure of what to do.

George glanced at his partner.

"When I say go, we run." George whispered.

"What?" Dream asked in confusion.

George looked back at everyone.

"I swear to you all, me and Dream will be here to protect you." He said, and then turned to his partner with a smile. "Go."

Him and Dream both turned and sprinted away, hearing a few shots from behind.

George didn't actually expect Dream to blindly trust him, but he did. And they ran quite far, to a new lonely alleyway.

Dream was laughing, a wheeze coming out of his mouth as he doubled over in a fit of hysteria, coughing up a laugh.

"That was fucking insane." He cackled. George couldn't help but laugh too. "Why did we run?"

"We were running out of time, and there wasn't much else we could say to convince them. They'll see when we defeat the next villain." George said. Dream stood up straight with a smile, and held out his hand.

"I think we got off to the wrong start. Hi. I'm Dream." He said. George took his hand and shook it.

"I guess I'm.... GNotFound." He said, and Dream snorted at that. "Don't laugh."

"That's what you came up with?"

"Leave me alone, I panicked." George said, letting go of his hand.

"I'm not calling you that. I'll call you G." Dream decided. George raised an eyebrow.

"G?"

"Yep. G." He grinned. George shook his head.

"Alright. Well, we actually did good today. It was..."

"Exhilarating." Dream cut in. George smiled.

"Yes. Exhilarating." He agreed.

George's pendent started rapidly flashing and he looked down in a panic.

"Well, I guess I'll see you next time, G." He said. George nodded.

"Goodbye, Dream."

#### Chapter End Notes

The next chapter will be back to the present :)

# His name is Clay

## Chapter Summary

George tells his parents something important at dinner. And the next day of school doesn't go too well...

## Chapter Notes

TW// homophobia, homophobic slur (censored)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## PRESENT DAY

George was walking through the hallway of school, his mind off in another world, as usual. Probably overthinking. He was alone, on his way to lunch.

But something snapped him out of his thoughts, some yelling. George snapped his head in the direction of the sounds. He immediately started jogging over, down the hall.

When he turned, he finally found the source. Three guys were pushing another against the lockers, yelling at him. One of them shoved him to the ground, and the boy covered his face.

"Hey!" George's voice boomed through the hall as he stalked over the them. They looked like sophomores, but were the same height as George. They all looked at him as he stormed towards them.

"What?" One of them smirked at George, who pushed them away from the kid on the ground and stood between them.

"Don't fucking hurt innocent people." George said. What else was he supposed to say? All three boys crossed their arms.

"What are you going to do about it?" One of them said, getting right up close to George, eye to eye.

"Leave him alone, he did nothing." George repeated. He doesn't even know the kid he is defending.

"He's fucking weird, got two different coloured eyes, plus he's quiet. He kinda deserves it."

"Deserves being beat up because he looks different and minds his own business? Who fucking raised you." George said.

"My mom."

"Well she must be fucking ashamed if she has you as a son." George said. The boy in front scowled

and grabbed George by the scruff of his shirt. George put a hand over the kid's wrist, trying to pull it off.

"What did you say."

"I *said* stop messing with the kid." George said.

"No, about my mother."

"She's ashamed of you." George repeated with a smirk. But he stopped smirking when he felt his back hit the cold metal of the lockers behind him. He winced in pain.

"George?" He heard a voice and looked to his right to see Clay looking confused at what he was seeing, and growing increasingly angrier.

"Hey, get the fuck off him." Clay said, walking over. The sophomores all turned to the tall, blonde senior, and the one holding George immediately let go, stepping back.

"Go on. Scram." Clay said, pushing one in the chest, and they all turned and left, glancing once more.

Clay turned to George, who was dusting himself off.

"What was that about? Were you about to get your ass whooped by some sophomores?" He asked.

"In my defense, they were the same height as me and maybe a little stronger." George said.

"They were taller."

"Shut up."

"How did you get into a fight with them then?" Clay asked.

George looked down, only just realising the sophomore kid he had defended was still there, his knees folded to his chest, just looking up at the two seniors.

He did in fact have two different coloured eyes. George couldn't quite pick the colours. One was yellow, the other brown. The kid had fluffy brown hair, and wearing a black and white jacket.

"Are you ok?" George asked. The boy nodded his head. George held out his hand, and he hesitantly took it, standing up. George noticed him wince.

"I'm George." George said carefully, realising that this kid was as tall as Clay. *Why are the sophomores all taller than me?*

"Um. I'm Ranboo." The boy said softly, and leaned against the locker.

"Do you need to go to the nurse? What happened?" Clay asked. Ranboo shook his head.

"The kids were messing with him, and hurting him. So I tried to stop them." George said. Clay looked at George, who shifted under his gaze. "I mean, at least they stopped hurting him." George added.

"Thanks George." Ranboo said quietly. George gave him a smile.

"It was no problem."

"Why did you help me?" Ranboo asked, still quiet. George shrugged, but both the boys wanted to hear his response.

"Well, they were hurting you. I don't like seeing others in pain so I just followed my instincts. It's not a big deal, anyone would do the same." George said.

"No one has before." Ranboo said, touching his nose which was bleeding.

"I seriously think you need to see the nurse." Clay said. Ranboo shook his head and began to walk, but he stumbled.

Instinctively, both George and Clay both grabbed an arm each. Clay put one of Ranboo's arms around his neck and George did the same to the other. Clay glanced at George.

"Let's take him to the nurse." Clay said. Ranboo shook his head again.

"Please don't. I just need to sit down for a moment. I can't miss the next class, I have a test." Ranboo said, as Clay and George started walking, helping Ranboo.

"We can let your teacher know." George said. Ranboo shook his head.

"Please. Just take me to the cafeteria." Ranboo said. George glanced over at Clay again, who looked concerned but shrugged.

"Ok, fine. Which table are your friends at?" George asked, as they changed their direction.

"I don't have any friends." Ranboo said, a pained laugh following. George furrowed his eyebrows as they entered the cafeteria.

"You can sit with me and my friends. We sit with two sophomores, maybe you know them." George said. Ranboo's eyes went wide.

"No, I'm fine. I don't need friends."

"They aren't going to be mean. They are nice I swear. Chaotic, sure." George said, steering them towards his table, where he could see Tubbo lying on the floor and Tommy standing up with a foot lightly on Tubbo's chest. The others were laughing.

"I have defeated him!" Tommy cheered, when George, Ranboo and Clay finally reached the table. They all turned to look at the trio as they helped Ranboo sit down.

"What the hell happened? Is he ok?" Darryl asked. Tubbo got up from the ground and both him and Tommy sat down opposite Ranboo, looking at him in concern.

"Ranboo?" Tubbo asked. Ranboo looked up.

"Oh. Hi Tubbo." Ranboo said, relaxing slightly when he recognised him.

"George found him getting beat up by sophomores." Clay said.

"You need to see the nurse." Skeppy said, as Darryl handed some tissues to Ranboo for his nose.

"I'm fine." Ranboo said quietly, looking at the table. George sat down beside Ranboo, and glanced up to see Clay still awkwardly standing.

Nick nudged George, giving a pointed look towards Clay. George cleared his throat, looking at

Clay.

"Thanks for helping, Clay. You can um.... go sit with your friends now. If you want." George said. Clay looked at him and nodded, scratching the back of his neck.

"Yeah, sure. See you guys later." Clay waved and walked over to his table.

When he left, Nick kicked him sharp in the shin, making George hiss in pain.

"You idiot. He clearly wanted to sit down here." Nick said.

"What? No, he wanted to sit with his friends I was just letting him know he didn't have to wait." George said.

"No, he was waiting for an invitation to sit, you idiot." Nick muttered. George's eyes widened in panic.

"He knows he can sit with us whenever. I told him that." Darryl said.

"He clearly doesn't just want to intrude. My god, George." Nick said.

"I didn't know!" George said, sighing after and leaning back in his chair, but he remembered Ranboo.

"Oh shoot, sorry Ranboo. Ok, this is Nick, he's an idiot. That's Quackity, also an idiot. Skeppy, idiot. Darryl, less of an idiot but still an idiot. Tommy, a problem child, and Tubbo who you seem to already know." George quickly introduced everyone. They all made sounds of annoyance at George.

"I am not a fucking child, *Gogy*." Tommy said, staring down George.

"You have the filthy mouth for one!" Darryl scolded him.

"Why were you looking at my mouth, Darryl. That's kind of weirdchamp, you know I'm a minor-"

"Tommy, shut up." George interrupted.

"Anyways. Hello. Ran. Boo." Tommy said, staring Ranboo down.

"Uh, hi." Ranboo said.

"We have gym together. But neither of us participate much." Tubbo said, and Ranboo nodded.

"So, *Ranboo* what kind of a name is that anyways? Also, who is your favourite woman?" Tommy asked. Everyone rolled their eyes.

"Don't be mean." Darryl said.

"It's not mean. It's a question. There's no way that's his real name."

"Well it could be-"

"Um, actually Tommy's right. It isn't my real name." Ranboo said.

"What is your real name?" Tubbo asked. Ranboo hesitated.

"I don't remember..." He said.



"You don't... remember your name? How? What kind of shit memory do you have." Quackity said, and Darryl hit him.

"My parents don't know either. Everyone just calls me Ranboo. My birth certificate is somewhere." The boy shrugged.

"That's strange. You're strange." Tommy said. George kicked him.

"He's not strange, Tommy."

"He is a bit, but it's cool. I like you Ranboo." Tommy declared. Ranboo stared at him. "You are now one of my friends."

"Is this a good thing?" Ranboo whispered.

"No, but you have no way out now. He's very clingy." Tubbo whispered back, but Tommy pushed him off the chair.

"You're the clingy one!"

While they all fought, George opened his bag and pulled out a sandwich he had made this morning before school and he began to eat it, watching the argument unfold in front of him.

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"George! Wait up." He heard Clay's voice, as he was about to get in the car. He turned and saw the boy running over. George looked back down at the car.

"Um. One sec." He said to his Mom and sister, and closed the door and turned to Clay.

"What's up." George tried to say casually, but it sounded forced.

"I just wanted to say it was really cool what you did for that Ranboo kid." Clay said, smiling.

"Oh. I mean, I was just doing what I thought was right."

"Still. It was very... heroic, of you." Clay said. George awkwardly shrugged and laughed.

"Not really. I almost got my ass beat by sophomores."

"You were holding your ground."

"I'm not really a fighter..." George said. Clay chuckled.

"You don't have to be a fighter to defend what's right. I just wanted to say it was cool. You continue to surprise me, George." Clay shook his head with a smile.

"Surprise you? What do you mean?"

"You do things I wouldn't expect of you." Clay said. George furrowed his eyebrows at what he meant.

"George, hurry up." Lexi yelled from the car. He turned to see his Mom wind down the window.

"Your friend can come over if he wants, only if it's to study." Lorna said.

"Oh, I'm grounded. But thank you Mrs Davidson." Clay said. Lorna looked at George, giving him

a look.

"Sorry. Mom, this is Clay, he's in a lot of my classes. Clay, this is my Mom." George said.

"Thank you, George. But I do know who he is, Clay Block. You can call me Lorna by the way. And you're free to come over anytime, even if you're grounded." She said with a smile. Clay laughed.

"What? But *I'm* grounded." George said, confused.

"Thank you for the offer Lorna. I'll see you tomorrow, George." Clay said, waving and walking away. George stared back and forth between his mother and his friend who was gone, incredibly confused by the conversation that just went down. He shook his head he got into the front of seat of his car.

"So people can come to my house but I can't go over? Is that the rule?" He asked. Lorna hummed, beginning to drive.

"Only if it's to study." She said. George nodded, *good to know*.

"Well Clay's quite a charmer isn't he." Lorna said.

"What?" George asked.

"He speaks well. Must have to, being the Mayor's son and being on Tv a bunch." She glanced at George. "You didn't tell me you were friends with Clay Block." She said. George shrugged, leaning back in his seat.

"I remember you telling me he must be a prick, like his father." Lorna sang. George rolled his eyes.

"That was like, a year ago." He said. Lorna chuckled.

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"Dinner's ready!" George's dad called him. He put down his pen and closed his laptop, leaving his room and jogging down the stairs.

His Mom and Lexi were already sitting down, and George's dad was bringing in the food. George sat down across from his sister.

"We haven't had a family dinner in a while." Lorna said.

"Yeah. Cause everyone just makes their own dinner when they are hungry." Lexi said.

"I think it's nice for us all to sit down together and eat. I know sometimes it's because I have to stay late at work." George's Dad, Mark said. Mark is a reporter, although thankfully has never been a reporter who talks to George. George doesn't think he could handle if he was talking to his dad.

"How was your day at work, Dad." George said, as he began to pile food onto his plate. He got some chicken and salad.

"It was alright. Everyone is going crazy preparing for the GNotfound and Dream interview coming up. I wanted to take it, but they gave it to Mandy. I just know she's going to take it too far. I just know it." He said. George sighed in relief. He simply would not go if it was his father interviewing him.

"Maybe you'll get to in the future." Lorna said. Mark shrugged.

"So how was school?" He asked Lexi and George.

"Boring. As usual." Lexi said.

"Yeah, same." George said. His parents looked at him.

"Did you go to all your classes?" His mom asked. George suppressed a groaned, instead stabbing his fork into his chicken.

"Yes. I did."

"Ok, that's good."

"I don't get why George hasn't got in trouble for ditching." Lexi butted in.

"He is in trouble. He had to see the principal, and he's grounded." Mark said.

"Yeah, but he's not really." Lexi said.

"George is just a bit overwhelmed with everything. Getting angry won't fix anything." Lorna said, glancing at George. *They know I'm sitting right here, right?*

"How was your day Mom." George asked, changing the subject.

"It was ok, the kids were crazy today though." Lorna said. She works as an elementary school teacher.

The table went silent for a few minutes as they ate.

"So, Lexi. How are your friends going?" Mark asked. Lexi shrugged.

"They're fine. We meet everyday before school still. I've made some more friends though in English recently. Cause you know I didn't have any friends in that class. And they are cool, kinda annoying though." Lexi said.

"Oh who?" Lorna asked.

"Tommy and Toby." She said. George choked, and looked at her.

"You're friends with those rat children?"

"Aren't *you* the one who *sits* with the rat children. That's weirder." Lexi rebutted. George froze. Touché.

"Are these the sophomores at your table you complain about?" Mark asked George.

"Yeah. Tommy and Tubbo." George nodded.

"Do you have a crush on one, Lexi?" Lorna asked. Lexi choked on her food.

"Mom! No!" She said. Lorna raised her hands in defence.

"Just a question." She said, smiling. Lexi gagged.

"Definitely not." She said.

"Well, do you like anyone?" Lorna continued to interrogate her daughter. Lexi covered her face.

"No she doesn't." George said, not even looking at his sister. He couldn't even picture her in the dating scene. The thought made him want to punch someone.

"How would you know." Lexi said.

"Well if you did, I would promptly kill them."

"What the hell?"

"That's weird. You're like ten. You can't date anyone." George shrugged.

"I can date who I want, and I'm fifteen." Lexi rebutted.

"Ok, ok. That's enough. Lexi can date who she wants. George you can't kill them." Lorna said. Mark chose to stay out of this conversation.

George glared at Lexi, who glared right back.

"Well what about you George? Anyone you're interested in?" Lexi said, her mouth turned to a smirk. George froze. *Oh this bitch.*

"No." George said.

"Really? No one?" Lorna joined in, looking at him.

"No one." George said.

"Really?" Lexi said with a smirk, leaning back in her chair. George shot daggers at her.

"Does Lexi know something?" Mark asked.

"No she doesn't." George said.

"Come on, George. You can tell us who it is. We don't care who, and it's not like we would tell them." Lorna said. George looked at her, then looked back down.

"You don't have to share." Mark said, noticing his son's discomfort. George shrugged.

"Yeah, we are just teasing George." Lorna said. George looked back up at her.

"Do... do you remember yesterday in the car. When I asked how you would react if I was to tell you something that would change how you see me." George started carefully. Lorna smiled.

"Yes, and I responded saying nothing you could say would change how much we love you." Lorna said.

"Even if it would change who you think I am?" George said softly. Lorna leaned forward and put a hand on his arm, nodding.

Lexi looked at George with wide eyes. She knew where this was going, and never intended to accidentally put her brother in this situation. She was just teasing.

George looked up at his Dad, who smiled. "You could literally tell us you were half robot and we wouldn't care." He said.

"Half robot would be quite cool, actually." Lorna laughed. George took a deep breath.

"I do have a crush on someone." George said. The three all looked at him. George felt something touch his foot and realised Lexi had hooked her ankle with his.

"His name is Clay." George said so quietly that it almost wasn't heard. But it was.

Lorna grabbed one of his hands and ran her fingers over his knuckles with a smile.

"Oh, is that the mayors son? The tall blonde? He seems really nice actually, nothing like his father." Mark said casually.

"Yeah, I met him. Very charming. Has a great smile." Lorna said.

"I don't know, he's kinda weird not gonna lie. Drista is way cooler of the siblings." Lexi shrugged.

"How long have you liked him?" Lorna asked George with a smile, still rubbing his knuckles. George took a shaky breath and wipe a tear that had fallen down his cheek.

"Like, a year." He laughed.

"A year? George, come on. You can't just ignore it." Lexi said.

"Yeah, you should just ask him. You never know, he could feel the same." Lorna said.

"Very true." Mark said. George laughed, wiping his face. He was so thankful for how they took it. He had prepared himself for the worst. He had prepared to be bombarded with questions about why he hadn't told them. When he found out. Or even when would this phase end.

But no, his stupid family scolded him for not asking out his crush instead. *Of course they would.*

George got up and hugged his Mom, and she gave him a kiss on the forehead.

"That's what you were worried about?" She asked. George nodded into her neck. He let go and hugged his Dad too.

"Don't you dare hug me, George." Lexi threatened.

"Wasn't planning on getting a disease today." George said to her. She scoffed.

"I'm sorry. By the way." She said, softer and more serious. He ruffled her hair.

"All good, Lex." He told her.

They knew. They finally knew.

He no longer felt like he had to hide both of his personalities. He could be himself as George. He could be himself.

Well, he could be mostly himself.

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The next day at school, George felt like he was floating on air. He walked to his locker with a smile on his face, and when he saw Nick, he skipped over hugged him.

"George?" Nick said with a laugh. George buried his head into his best friend's shoulder.

"I told them." He whispered.

"What?" Nick asked, genuinely not being able to hear his muffled voice. George raised his head and grinned.

"I told my parents I'm gay." George said. Nick's eyebrows shot up and a smile fell on his face too when he registered George's mood.

"I'm so fucking proud!" Nick cheered, jumping up and around in circles while holding George's hands. George was giggling as they spun around.

"I take it they took it well?" Nick said when they stopped. George nodded, releasing a sigh. Nick hugged him again.

"I told you."

"Thank you Nick." George said. He was so thankful for Nick and how supportive he was of him.

"Excuse me." A voice interrupted them. They turned and saw a girl. It was Violet, Clay's ex. How long was she there?

"That's my locker." She said, pointing behind them.

"Oh, sorry." George said, pulling Nick to the side. Violet didn't say anything, just proceeded to unlock her locker.

George and Nick looked at each other.

"What do we have first?" Nick asked.

"Gym." George responded.

"Clay!" Violet's high pitched voice made George jump. They turned to see Violet waving at the blonde boy in the distance. He slowly waved back and started walking over.

George started walking away with Nick. They didn't want to eavesdrop. Plus, he hated Violet and Clay interactions.

"George! Nick!" Clay yelled, and the pair turned back around. Clay jogged past Violet and stopped them.

"Can you wait for me? We have gym." He said.

"Oh, yeah. Sure." Nick said, as George nodded. Clay grinned, but then took a deep breath and turned back around to Violet.

She was staring down at George, her chocolate eyes meeting his.

"Hey, Vi." Clay said.

"Are you going to introduce us?" Violet asked, gesturing between herself and George and Nick. Clay looked at all three of them.

"Um, yeah. This is George and Nick. Guys, this is Violet." Clay said nervously.

"I know. We've had classes together since middle school." Nick said, raising an eyebrow.

"Hm." Violet hummed, staring at the pair. "Nope mustn't have been relevant enough for me to remember." She said. Clay furrowed his eyebrows.

"Anyways. Clay, you said you'd hang out with me." She whined.

"I'm grounded." Clay said. George sighed, looking at Nick. He didn't really want to hear his crush and his crush's ex talk.

"Grounded? For what?" She asked, putting a hand on his upper arm. George felt himself tense.

"A few things." Clay nervously laughed, trying to pull his arm away.

"Wow, so you're rebellious. I see, I see." She said, looking him up and down. Clay shifted awkwardly under her gaze.

"We have to go to gym." George interrupted. Violet glanced at him.

"Ok? And?" She said.

"Clay's in our class, and he kind of needs his arm." George said.

Violet let go and stared at George.

"What was your name again? Greg?"

"It's George." Clay interrupted, moving to stand beside George. Violet looked between the two, and recalled the conversation she overheard earlier between Nick and George.

She saw Clay's hand brush against George's, whether intentional or not, she noticed.

"Ok, *George*. I'll see you around." She said, then turned to Clay. "I'll text you." She smiled her sickly sweet smile, before walking away.

Clay turned to George.

"Thanks for that. I don't want to be late." Clay said. George cleared his throat.

"Y-yeah, anytime." George replied, as the trio walked down the hall towards gym.

George didn't like the way Violet looked at him.

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George should have realised something was going on, when that one group of people was staring at him as he walked through the hallway. It gave him an uneasy feeling in his stomach.

Something to know about this school, was that gossip spread like wildfire. Whether by word of mouth or over social media, everyone finds out.

But that's mostly due to the fact that there was hardly any drama usually. For a high school, it wasn't very interesting. But this only made new information more exciting to spread.

"George!" He heard a voice, and turned to see Tommy running at him. It was terrifying actually, seeing this six foot lanky sophomore sprinting at you.

"Tommy?" George said when the boy reached him.

"My friend! Hey, do you want to sit somewhere else today? I don't really like the cafeteria and I want some one on one time with Gogs." Tommy said. George narrowed his eyes at him.

"Um, I kind of like the cafeteria. Plus I have lunch to eat, so..."

"But here me out... we sit here! It's nice and quiet, no people, no one will bother us. It'll be great!" Tommy said.

"Why."

"I told you, I don't like the cafeteria. Too dirty and shit."

George noticed a small group of guys walking down the hall and they were snickering as they passed. George would have missed it, if one of the guys didn't say it directly into his ear.

"F\*g." The kid said.

George's stomach dropped.

Before George could even react, Tommy had already shoved the guy away. Him and his friends laughed down the hall, but Tommy turned back to George.

Tommy hesitantly looked at his friend, who was frozen in place.

"Yeah. L-let's sit here." George said, his voice cracking as he sat down in the hallway, leaning against the wall.

Tommy slowly sat down in front of him, crossing his legs.

George could put the pieces together quite quickly. Somehow, it got out that he was gay. He wasn't sure who though. Not many people knew.

Tommy didn't know what to say.

"Is, um, is it true?" Tommy asked George, instantly regretting the question. George looked at him.

"Yes, I'm gay. Is that what you wanted to hear Tommy?" George said, slightly harsh. Tommy leaned away, unsure of what to say next. George covered his face.

"Hey, man. It's ok, I'm proud of you."

"For what? I didn't even tell you willingly." George said, muffled by his hands.

"I'm proud of you always. For just being you, for telling someone, even if it somehow got out." Tommy said. George looked up at the freshman.

"Stop that. Stop being mature. It's weird." George said. Tommy laughed.

"I mean, I can go back to normal me if you want." Tommy offered. George smiled slightly.

"Thanks Tommy." George said softly. Tommy patted him on the shoulder.

"Yeah, man. Of course. Also, I had my suspicions. I thought you might have a crush on that Clay kid. But I didn't really know until now. I heard the rumour and my first thought was wanting to start stabbing shit. But then I thought of how you were feeling and tried to find you instead." Tommy said. So it really was that obvious he likes Clay.



"Don't tell anyone I like him." George said, admitting it.

"Of course not. Although I will bully you about it soon."

"Whatever." George rolled his eyes. "And, thanks Tommy. For finding me. Do... do you mind if we just chill here for this lunch?" Tommy nodded.

"Yeah, of course man." Tommy said, leaning back on his hands. George closed his eyes and took some deep breaths.

*It doesn't matter what people think. Only the people that I care about. And so far, they all have been supportive.*

George tried to reason to himself. But the anxiety was kicking in. He wanted to leave. He wanted to run out of the school and never return. Before, people barely knew he existed. Now they know he is gay.

"Is... how many people have heard the rumour?" George asked.

"I don't want to lie to you. It's reached my grade. You know this school, any piece of gossip they can get their hands on is spread. But I bet half the people in this school are closeted, or have internalised homophobia." Tommy said. George took a deep breath.

He can't go home. His attendance is already in shambles apparently. This will just be more ammo for Puffy.

"Can... yeah I just need a minute... to process." *That literally the entire school knows what I only just told my parents last night.*

"It's fine. Take as long as you need. Do you think you'll be ok?" Tommy said.

"I don't know. I wish it didn't happen like this, but, I'm proud of my sexuality. I think... I think I just need time to process everyone knowing the secret I've kept for years." George said. Tommy nodded.

"Well it's just us two right now. You're allowed to be upset by this, you don't have to pretend it's ok. Being outed is not ok. I can't imagine how it would feel." Tommy said. George put his hands behind his neck, leaning his elbows on his knees.

"I'm just glad you are ok with it." George said, laughing without any humour. Tommy smiled

"Of course I am. Same with everyone else, I'm sure. We don't care who you love, we will bully you anyways." Tommy said. George snorted, but then he felt a prickliness in his eyes.

"Why am I like this." George said, reaching up to stop his tears.

"It's ok to cry. It's just me." Tommy said. George laughed while wiping a tear.

"It's just a bit overwhelming. I feel like i'm suffocating." George said.

*And I hate the feeling of not being able to breathe.*

"It's going to be ok, I promise Gogs."

•

"Where is he?" Nick asked the group. They were all standing by the entrance of the cafeteria, hoping to catch George before he enters.

"I don't know. Do you think he heard?" Skeppy asked.

"I'm going to fucking kill whoever spread it." Nick said, his hands balling to fists.

I heard the squeak of a chair, and someone running over.

"Nick! Where's George? Is he ok?" Karl said. It surprised Nick slightly. Him and Karl were neighbours, and actually good friends, but he didn't think Karl had ever really spoken to George.

"We don't know where he is." Nick replied.

Nick looked around the cafeteria, and saw a number of people looking at the group. Nick was on the verge of punching a wall. Karl grabbed his hand.

"It's ok. I'm sure George is ok." He said. Nick nodded, taking a deep breath to calm down.

"Where's Tommy?" Tubbo asked, looking around.

"Maybe he found George, can you text him?" Quackity said. Nick decided he had had enough of the stares. He began to walk away from the cafeteria, the others following.

Nick could hear someone running from behind, and he turned with the hope it was George.

But instead he was met with a tall blonde with green eyes, jogging to catch up.

"Nick! What's happening? I heard something happened to George?" Clay said, slowing when he reached them.

"Did you hear the rumour?" Nick asked. Clay furrowed his eyebrows and shook his head.

"What rumour? I just got a text from Karl asking if I knew where George was. Is he ok? Is it a supervillain? Do we need to call for help?" Clay asked.

"It's not a supervillain, Clay." Karl said.

"If you haven't heard the rumour, I'm not going to tell you. George can say himself." Nick said, turning and walking down the hall, pulling out his phone and calling George for the twentieth time.

"He might have gone home. If he's heard it." Darryl said.

"I would too. That's overwhelming." Skeppy said. Clay had jogged up so he was beside Nick.

"Why can't you tell me? It's just a rumour right?" Clay asked. Nick didn't respond. It wasn't just a rumour. It was true.

"Tommy is with George." Tubbo said suddenly, quickly replying on his phone. Nick spun around and ran to Tubbo's side. He took the phone and hit call.

It rang for several moments, Nick nervously tapping his foot, but then Tommy answered.

"Not right now Tubbo." Tommy said.

"It's Nick. Is George ok? Are you with him?" Nick said, and then put the phone on speaker so his

friends could hear.

"George is fine, yes I'm with him." Tommy replied.

"Where are you guys, we are coming." Nick said.

"No, it's fine. George just needs a minute to himself." Tommy responded.

"Is that Nick?" He heard George's voice.

"George!" Nick yelled into the phone.

"Yeah, do you want to talk to him?" Tommy asked. He couldn't hear George's response, but Tommy spoke again. "Ok. I'll pass you to George, Nick." Tommy said.

Nick quickly took the phone off speaker and walked away from the group.

"Nick?" He heard George's small voice, and Nick sighed in relief.

"Hey Gogy."

There was a beat of silence before Nick continued.

"How are you feeling?" Nick asked. He heard George take a deep breath.

"I'm... I'm ok. Just a bit overwhelmed, you know? I only just told my parents last night. I'm proud of who I am, it'll just take some getting used to that everyone knows I guess." George said.

"It was completely unfair for this to happen. No one deserves to be outed without their control." Nick replied. George hummed in response. "You don't have to stay at school. If it's too much, go home. One day isn't going to affect your already shit attendance more. And I think this is a reasonable explanation." Nick said. George took another breath.

"I'm... I'll stay. I'm ok, just needed a moment alone." George replied.

Behind, away from the phone call, was the rest of their friends. Clay couldn't hear what Nick was saying.

Clay turned to Karl.

"Seriously, why can't anyone tell me what's going on? It's just a rumour, it's not real right?" Clay asked. Karl shifted uncomfortably.

"Well, I... I mean, I don't know since I haven't really spoken to George much. But judging by everyone's reactions, I think the rumour is true. It's nothing bad, and I think it's actually amazing, but it got out without George knowing. And it's really unfair to him, when he should be the one to control who knows." Karl said. Clay ran a hand through his hair.

"So if it is true, then why can't I know?"

"Because it's not my business to say. I don't know why everyone else in this honking school decided to spread it, but I think you should ask George yourself." Karl said.

"So everyone knows except me? And I'm actually one of his friends?" Clay said, feeling slightly hurt.

"I don't even think some of his friend group knew either. Don't be offended by it, Clay. This isn't to do with you, it's about George. And when he was ready to share." Karl said. Clay nodded, glancing back over at George's friend group.

"Ok. George said he's ok. Tommy is going to stay with him and he might join us at the cafeteria in a bit." Nick said, hanging up the phone and passing it back to Tubbo with a quick apology.

"The cafeteria? Where everybody is?" Quackity asked. Nick nodded.

"I think he's not as bothered by it as I expected. I'm more angry than him." Nick said.

"Clay!" He heard a shrill voice and he winced, turning to see his ex. He didn't have anything against Violet, in fact, she was very nice. At least to him. But he realised he didn't like her that way, so they decided to stay friends.

He had fallen for a particular boy in a blue costume and goggles instead.

"I said we could text later, I'm kind of busy Vi." Clay said when she came over. Clay looked at everyone else, feeling awkward.

"I'll meet you guys at the cafeteria." He said, and then grabbed Violet's wrist and pulled her away.

"I know you're busy, but I just wanted to check in. Are you ok?" She asked. Clay cocked his head in confusion.

"Yeah... I'm fine. Why are you asking?" He said.

"Well after what we found out about... what was his name? Grog or something?"

"George?"

"Yeah, George. After what we found out about George. You must feel kind of shocked. I wouldn't be surprised if you are uncomfortable around him now. Makes perfect sense, he never told you, which is so unfair." Violet said, patting his hand.

"I haven't heard the rumour and I don't want to know, Vi. George can tell me himself, whatever it is." Clay said.

"You should know. It's quite upsetting he didn't tell you. Especially by how close you two were getting. He was manipulating you." Violet said.

Clay stared at Violet, confusion etched on his face.

"Manipulating? What are you talking about?" He asked.

"George is gay." Violet said, and Clay's mouth dropped open. He didn't respond for a minute.

"What... the fuck." Clay said.

Chapter End Notes

Poor George :(



# When you fell from heaven

## Chapter Summary

Clay is in awe of how well George is dealing with him being outed to the school. But is he doing as well as he claims to be?

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"What... the fuck." Clay said.

"Huh?" He heard a small voice and turned to see George and Tommy standing there, watching Clay and Violet talk.

George bit his lip and looked away, Tommy's jaw dropped and his face scrunched in anger.

"Say that again, Clay." Tommy said.

Clay looked between them and Violet, then his eyes widened as he realised what that sounded like.

"What, no I wasn't talking about-"

"She told you George was gay... and your response was '*what the fuck*'." Tommy said, stepping closer to Clay. He was tall, for a sophomore, but Clay was still taller.

Clay looked over his shoulder and saw George fiddling with his fingers. Clay looked at Violet, and pulled his hand away from her.

"I said what the fuck to *her*. I can't believe she told me, when I specifically said I wanted George to tell me what the rumour was. I can't believe you fucking said that, Violet." Clay said, glaring at her. She just pouted.

Clay turned to George, moving around Tommy who was still braced with anger.

"George, I don't care what your sexuality is. I'm sorry it got out, that's horrible. I swear I was talking to Violet when I said that." Clay said, desperately trying to explain himself. George looked up.

"It's ok, I believe you." He said. Clay sighed in relief, and walked closer to him. "Can I give you a hug?" He asked. George looked unsure, but then nodded.

Clay took the last step and pulled George into a hug, wrapping his arms around his shoulders and holding him close. George hesitantly put his arms around Clay's middle, his palms pressing against his back. George rested his head against Clay's chest, taking a deep breath as he melted into the touch.

"I'm so sorry you were outed. It's completely unfair." Clay said softly. George shrugged.

"It's fine. I came out to my parents last night. I'm just glad I got to tell them myself. And if they are

ok with it, I don't care who else knows." George said. Clay hugged George tighter, if it was even possible.

"That's awesome, George. I'm so happy your family accepts you. They seem like really nice people." Clay said, recalling his brief interactions with both George's mom and sister.

He couldn't help but envy his friend. He envied his supportive family.

George suddenly felt awkward in the hug, and pulled away.

"Yeah. Anyways, I'm kind of hungry, can we go eat?" George said to Clay and Tommy, who was watching the seniors' interaction with a smirk.

Clay turned to Violet, who was watching to the side.

"What the hell is wrong with you." He said.

"What? You were going to find out anyway, why is it a big deal?" She said. Clay shook his head in anger, and grabbed George's hand and started leading him away, gesturing for Tommy to follow. *I can't believe she said those things.*

Clay was seething in anger as they walked, and didn't realise he was still holding George's hand.

"Can you give Gogy his hand back, he looks like he's in pain." Tommy said. Clay looked down and realised he was squeezing a bit tight. George also looked a bit red, looking away. Clay let go.

"Oh, sorry George. I didn't realise I grabbed your hand." Clay said.

"All good." George mumbled, avoiding eye contact.

By the time they had reached the cafeteria again, George had composed himself and Clay was less angry.

"We can go somewhere else..." Clay suggested.

"No, I'm fine. I'm starving and Nick is worried." George said, walking first into the room. Clay and Tommy followed, seemingly more nervous than George was.

But George held his head high, as he strolled to his table. He felt some people glancing at him, he heard some whispers and even some snickers. Someone coughed as he passed, but the word they had muttered was barely loud enough for him to hear.

Clay followed, in what could only be described as admiration, watching as George walked through the intimidating room to his table without even batting an eye.

*How does he do it? I could never do that. Not with everyone watching. Not with them all judging. Not with them knowing...*

George sat down next to Nick, who gave him a side-hug that George shrugged him off. Tommy sat down beside Tubbo and Ranboo.

Clay just stood by the table. He looked over at his usual table, and saw Karl had taken his usual seat, but he looked over and gave Clay a small smile. He was sitting beside Niki and Fundy, with Wilbur too. They were all looking over as well, watching George, along with most people in the room.

Why was this such a big deal? Was George the first gay person in this school? Was there no one else? *It's 2021 for fuck's sake.*

Something was messed up in this school. Maybe it's this city.

Hell, maybe the entire world was just a messed up place.

"Clay?" He heard a soft voice, and looked down to see George looking at him. "Do... do you want to sit here?" George asked. Clay smiled and nodded, taking the empty seat beside George.

"How are you feeling?" Clay cautiously asked George. George was in the process of unwrapping a sandwich, but he looked at him.

"I'm great. Hey, is that a pop tart Q? Can I have some?" George asked. Quackity had just unwrapped it, and looked at it, then back up at George.

"Fuck no, it's mine." He said, and took a bite. George leaned over and tried to swipe some, but Quackity pulled away and almost fell out of his chair.

"Fuck you George, no!"

"Language!" Darryl said to Quackity.

"Fuck. Shit. Fuck. Fuck. Dick. Bitch." Tommy said to Darryl, who yelled and covered his ears. Clay let out a laugh too as he watched them all.

They were somehow more chaotic than his other friends. The only one who seemed to be somewhat confused by how everyone was acting was Ranboo, who had been following Tubbo since yesterday.

"Hey, who kicked me?" Nick yelled.

"Oops, I was aiming for Quackity." Skeppy said. Clay felt the table shake as Nick kicked him back, but Tommy let out a yell when he was the one who had been kicked.

Clay glanced at George, who had removed himself from the chaos, even though he had started it. The brunette was just watching the arguments unfold, holding his lunch but not eating it. Clay leaned down so he was closer to his ear.

"Look what you started." He said softly, making George jump at the unexpected whisper in his ear.

"H-huh?" George stammered.

"You know exactly what to do to get them all riled up. Did you do it on purpose?" Clay chuckled. George looked at his friends, who were still yelling like usual, and then back at Clay.

"Maybe."

"Why?"

"I didn't like the looks they were giving me." George said even softer, looking away again. Clay frowned.

"What looks?"

"Pity."



A loud ding echoed around the room, the sound of every student in the cafeteria getting an alert.

Two of the people in the room felt their hearts begin to race just a bit more than everyone else, as they pulled out their phones.

## **CODE RED**

**City lockdown. Teleporting villain in purple seen stealing and injuring civilians. Call for GNotFound and Dream.**

As soon as the alert was read, the school lockdown alarm started blaring. Students began making their way into nearby classrooms. Some were freaked out, running. Others calmly made their way to classrooms, used to the drill by now.

George was racking his brain, trying to pull out a new excuse.

His mind wasn't working. This timing was awful. He was just glad he didn't have to eat. He didn't have much of an appetite.

Since it was crowded, all the students were moving towards the doors in one massive group, George decided his best tactic was to lose his friends, by easily slipping through students. When he reached the hall, he ran opposite to where everyone else was heading, instead he ran towards the front of the school.

Clay meanwhile had less luck, likely his height finally being a disadvantage. He was forced into a classroom with the others.

"Where did George go?" Nick asked, spinning around. Clay looked as well, but couldn't see the shorter brunette.

"He's probably in another classroom. I'll go find him. Cause like, he probably wants to stay with us right." Clay said, feeling awful for using his friend as an excuse. Nick just nodded, still standing on his tip-toes.

Clay moved through the swarm of students to leave the classroom, and when he finally did, he jogged through the hall, towards the back of the school where there was an exit.

Both boys left the school and transformed in separate hidden areas, and then ran to make their way to the town centre. They had no clue where the teleporting villain would be, but they knew the police force always liked to centre themselves there.

On the way, Clay saw a flash of blue on the opposite rooftops.

"G!" He called, but his partner didn't react. Clay saw an opportunity and launched himself across the street, landing beside G, who jumped in shock and impulsively snapped his bow.

"Oh. Dream."

"Are you deaf?" Clay laughed. "I called your name."

"Oh. Sorry, I've just got a lot on my mind." G responded, putting away his bow.

"Fantasising about me again? Not surprised." Clay said, and G responded with a scoff.

"How are you going by the way? After... you know." Clay said, referring to the girl at the tower. G took a deep breath.

"I'm fine. Everything... everything is going just *great*." He said. Clay looked at him, trying to read him. He's gotten good at reading his body language, since he didn't have his eyes to look at.

G was tense, it was clear, and he wasn't looking at Clay. He was looking ahead, and it cause him to miss his footing a few times. G's clearly distracted.

"You're lying."

"No I'm not." G replied, his tone ending the conversation. Clay shut up after that.

They were about to reach the town centre, but G suddenly disappeared from beside him, and Clay immediately skidded to a stop. He turned to see G had been knocked to the ground with force, lying on his back.

"G?" Clay said, running to his partners side. G sat up, a hand over his chest.

"I'm ok. Something appeared in front of me and hit me before I could react." G said, letting Clay help him up.

"What?"

"It was the villain, pretty sure." G said.

"Purple?" Clay asked. G hesitated but then slowly nodded. And teleporting according to the alert.

"Dream!" G yelled, diving to the side of him, knocking something away from him. But when Clay spun to look, G had landed on the ground, no one under him.

"He was about to grab your ring." G groaned, getting back up. Clay balled his hand into a fist to protect his ring.

"Let's go." Clay said, grabbing G's arm and pulling him along. He pulled his arm away but maintained the same speed as Dream, as both superheroes made their way to the city centre.

A large amount of police were gathered, all with their shields up. George and Clay both jumped off the building and ran over, to some of the higher officers.

"Finally." One of them said.

"We already saw the villain, they were messing with us. What's happened so far?" George said, ignoring the rudeness of the cop.

"Well, they broke into some stores and took the money and then teleported away before we could get them. They've also broken into some people's houses. We have some officers around the city trying to track them, but it's impossible." The sergeant said.

"Ok. Well, I say we trap them." George said, turning to Dream. But he was looking off into the distance, not really paying attention. George narrowed his eyes. They can't *both* be distracted today.

"Dream." George snapped his fingers, and his partner turned.

"Hm? Trap? Yeah, whatever boss." Dream said. George shook his head and grabbed Dream's arm, pulling him away from all the cops.

"Ok. The villain has stolen money and valuables. But they know they need our jewels. That means that we can be the bait. We don't have to track them, they can come to us."

"Ok... but they can just teleport away before we take their jewel." Dream said.

"Yeah... I don't know how to keep them still." George said, biting his lip in thought.

Suddenly Dream shoved George to the side and dove behind him, but when George spun around, he saw the villain cackle and then teleport away again, Dream stumbling.

George heard a small pop behind him, and spun around, his fist aiming for the villain's head, full force behind the punch. But the villain ducked and disappeared again and George almost stumbled too from momentum.

George turned to Dream

"Just keep your fist closed. He will have to pry your hand open to get the ring." George said. Dream nodded, but George saw him staring at his pendent resting against his chest, and could guess what he was thinking.

"I'll be fine." George said. But he heard another pop behind him, and before he could react, Dream had already dived at the villain.

When George spun around, both Dream and the man were gone. One second they were there, the next... gone. George turned around in confusion.

"Dream?" He called.

"What is that?" Someone yelled, and George turned to the civilian. They were pointing in the air, where something was plummeting to the ground, from very high up.

George narrowed his eyes at the falling ball of yellow, but his eyes widened when he realised it was Dream.

George sprinted towards where it looked like Dream was going to land. The heroes may not get as injured as normal civilians, but from this height, at this speed, Dream could very well get severely injured.

George followed Dream's falling green body carefully, and could see Dream trying to rotate his body to the best position to land in.

"Oh my god!" People screamed as they realised who it was.

"Everyone back up." George yelled, also moving away slightly. He was timing it right.

Meanwhile Clay was plummeting, racking his brain desperately for ideas. His heart was beating fast as panic set in. The villain had teleported himself and Clay up in the air, higher than the entire city, and then let go. The villain tried to grab Clay's ring before he dropped him, but Clay managed to fight him off, resulting in him being dropped.

As he neared the ground, he realised he may not survive it. Even for a superhero, the impact could kill him.

But he could see G below, and felt himself relax slightly. It was G. He didn't trust anyone else more than him. He knew it was weird how much he trusted this nameless, faceless boy.

But nevertheless, he did.

Clay rotated himself in the air, bracing his body in case George couldn't catch him. The best way to land from a high drop is feet together, knees slightly bent. Guaranteed to break your legs, but the most likely way to survive.

Clay closed his eyes as he was seconds from impact.

George had backed up a far amount, and when the timing was right, he sprinted, and then launched himself into the air, colliding with Dream midair, wrapping his arms around the falling boy. The impact of George slowed the momentum of Dream a bit, and the two heroes landed several yards away from the initial landing spot, tumbling together.

The impact of George colliding with Dream while he was going 120 miles an hour was still a lot, and Dream was winded as he lay on the ground.

George was fine, and he kneeled beside Dream, grabbing his shoulders.

"Oh my God! Dream, are you're ok?" George said, his grip tight. Dream tried to take some breaths, but was wheezing slightly since the air had left him.

"Yep." Dream managed to whisper, a smile on his face. George let out a massive sigh of relief, and pulled Dream into a hug, wrapping his arms around his shoulders and pressing his chin against the top of his head. He felt Dream put one arm around his back, his other arm supporting himself as he sat up.

They haven't hugged very often.

"I wish you were the one that fell." Dream said between coughs, patting George on the back. The two of them tuned out the applause of onlookers.

"Me too, then I could have use my shield to break the fall." George said, nodding as he pulled away. Dream shook his head.

"No. Because I have a really good pickup line I could have used." He said. George couldn't help but laugh at the idiocy of his partner.

"Leave it to you to brainstorm pickup lines while plummeting to your death." George said, helping Dream to his feet. Dream just grinned.

"On a serious note, did it hurt?" George asked, giving a look over his partner.

"No I'm fi-"

"When you fell from heaven." George cut in, a large grin growing on his face. Dream's jaw dropped.

"No you did not." Dream said.

"What? Surprised at how smooth I am?" George said, hands on his hips.

"You stole my line but I'm not even mad." Dream said and George laughed.

A flash of purple brought them both back to the present, and simultaneously George snapped his rubber band and Dream clicked his pen.

"I could do this all day. I could take Dream back up again, and then take GNotFound to another country. Who would save you then? You only lived because it was more entertaining for me to watch him save you." The villain said.

"Don't do this, you don't have to do what Blade says." George said, his fingers fiddling with the string of his bow as nerves set in.

The villain can teleport others as well as themselves- something they didn't realise until Dream was teleported and dropped. How could they get close enough to the villain, and stop them from teleporting?

"Give me your jewels or I'll take Dream to Australia and you to Alaska." The purple man said.

George looked closely and saw a sparkling jewel in a bracelet on his wrist.

"You know what, I'm actually fine with going, I've always wanted to visit Australia." Dream joked with a shrug.

"Well, if Dream's fine with it. Come and get my jewel then." George said to the villain, snapping away his bow and standing up straight. Dream looked at him like he was crazy.

"It was a joke. I don't actually wanna go to Australia, G. There's fucking snakes and spiders and shit!" Dream said, but George could actually hear the confusion in his tone.

The villain laughed and then teleported right in front of George with an outstretched hand. But George instantly grabbed his wrist and Dream's wrist.

"Shield!" He yelled, and the blue dome appeared, encompassing all three of them.

George yanked the villain down to the ground, and stood on his back.

The villain disappeared under his foot, but only reappeared a foot away at the edge of the shield. They gasped.

"Can't teleport in. Can't teleport out." George said with a laugh, and then shot an arrow at their leg, but they teleported behind George and dodged it.

Dream swung his sword out, above George's shoulder and beside his head, stopping before he hit George. The villain teleported behind Dream instead, grabbing him around the throat and slamming him to the ground.

George jumped on the villain, tearing him off Dream, but the villain flipped him over and grabbed George's pendent in his grasp.

"Time to see who you really are, *GNotFound*." He said, and then went to pull the pendent above George's head.

But at the last second, Dream dove at the man, knocking him off. And George felt the pendent land against his chest again, and he let out a breath.

Dream was lying on the man's back, but he teleported so Dream was beneath instead, reaching for his ring.

George dove and grabbed his arm, and before he could teleport away, he ripped the bracelet off his wrist with a snap.

A moment later, the man transformed back, falling onto the floor in shock. And a few seconds after that, the blue shield disappeared.

George took a deep breath. That was intense. Dream got up and they both looked down at the man. He was wearing a suit.

"Woah, that's pretty fancy." George commented. Dream looked at him.

"You'd look good in a suit." He whispered, and George scoffed.

"What? My blue supersuit not sexy enough?" George asked.

"Oh, it is."

"Keep it in your pants, Dreamy." George shook his head, reaching down to help the man stand up.

Dream didn't know how to respond. He was used to G just shutting down the stupid comments. But today he was firing back, teasing. *Dreamy*.

The police came over and took away the man, and then reporters started rushing over.

"GNotFound! Dream! Have a minute?" A woman asked. George glanced down at his pendent, which coincidentally flashed twice. 5 minutes.

"Um, sure. Shoot." George said, standing beside Dream as a camera was shoved in their face.

"We saw the save. What were you thinking when you were falling Dream? And what were you thinking on the ground GNotFound?" She asked.

"Well, I wasn't scared at all." Dream bragged, and George refrained from rolling his eyes. "I knew GNotFound would catch me." He then put an arm around George's shoulders, leaning on the smaller superhero.

"Well, I was a little worried because he was falling really fast and even though we are nearly invulnerable, that impact could have killed him. But I had to focus." George said.

"It was incredible. And then the quick thinking trapping him in your shield, amazing. How do you come up with ideas so quick on your feet?" She asked.

"Um, well practise I guess. We've fought a lot of villains and sometimes you have to think outside the box." George said.

"Well in this case, inside the box." Dream added.

"Anyways, I have to go now. And I'm sure Dream has to as well." George said, starting to back away from the camera.

"Thanks for your time! And we will be seeing you on Monday for the interview." The woman said. George and Dream nodded before turning and running away.

They reached a street away, and Dream spoke up.

"What do you think they'll ask at the interview?" He asked as they ran.

"Probably intrusive questions. But I think the Mayor told them not to, since he organised it. I want them to focus on our jobs, not our personal lives." George said.

"Yeah. What if they do try to get personal information though?" Dream said.

"Just remind them we can't share it. We don't owe them anything." George said.

A few seconds later, George's pendent started buzzing and he groaned.

"Great. Now I have to walk. Well, I'll see you later Dream." George said.

"Bye, G. Also remember you can talk to me if anything is bothering you." Dream said earnestly.

"We can't share our personal lives, but yeah. You too." George said, before turning and running a separate way to Dream.

When he got far enough, he transformed back in an empty alleyway, and let out a sigh as he returned to being George Davidson.

But instead of going anywhere, he sat down, pulling his knees to his chest and resting his head against the brick wall in the alley.

There was no way he was going back to the school. He didn't think he physically could. It took too much energy to pretend that everything was ok. If he had to smile one more time, he feared he would break.

He didn't want to go home either. He just wanted to lie down and fall asleep forever. But not forever, he didn't want to die. He just.... he just wanted a break.

George has never felt so alone than he has this past year. No one to share everything with. No one who would understand. And he had no choice. His life was ruined the minute he accepted the sapphire.

George rested his forehead against his knees, breathing deeply. Whoever L was, he couldn't help but be a bit angry at them. They gave him the jewel, and the letter, and left him alone. No instructions, no guidance. No one who might understand.

No one could come close to helping George Davidson.

•

"He's not picking up. I thought you went to look for him." Nick said to Clay, who had made it back to school just as the lockdown was lifted.

"I tried but the teachers wouldn't let me leave the room I checked. He wasn't in there though. I'm sure he's fine." Clay said, feeling guilty he didn't actually check on George. The boy had been through enough today and was alone for an hour.

"Damn it George." Nick muttered, sending another text.

"He seems fine though. In fact, he seems like he handling the whole situation well, regardless." Clay added. Nick shrugged.

"Yeah, that's what he wants you to think." He said.

"What do you mean?"

"George used to be awful at acting, you know. You could tell when he was lying. Or when he was upset. Or when he was anxious. You could tell, it was clear as day. But the past year... it's been impossible. It's like he is completely unreadable at times. I can feel that something is wrong but I don't know what. He doesn't tell me anything anymore." Nick said. Clay frowned.

"Aren't you his best friend?" Clay said. Nick looked at him.

"Yeah, that's the issue. He won't even tell me what's going on. Today, he seemed like he was fine. Sure, he needed a minute to compose himself with Tommy. But he looked fine, right? Joking and talking with us. George has hidden that part of him for years. And in all of 24 hours, not only does his family know, but also the whole school? There's no way he's fine with it." Nick said. Clay nodded.

"So basically I don't think he's as ok as he says he is with this." Nick finished. Clay bit his lip.

"At least we are supportive right? And his parents." Clay said.

"Well, yeah, thank fuck. But that doesn't mean it was ok."

"Yeah, I know. It was awful that he was outed. But maybe he really *is* ok, since the people he cares about are supportive." Clay suggested.

"Yeah... that's true. I don't know, I just worry about him." Nick sighed. Clay patted him on the back.

"He's lucky to have you." He said. Nick gave him a small smile, and then his attention went back to his phone when he heard a ding.

"George went home, said he is ok but really tired." Nick read the message out loud.

"See? I said he would be ok." Clay said. Nick nodded, sending a quick reply to George.

"You know, I feel like one day he's going to explode." Nick said, pocketing the phone.

"Explode?"

"Yep. Like one of Tommy's cans of coke. Just-" Nick made an explosion gesture with his hands and a loud sound effect. "He can't keep it bottled up for that long. No one can."

"What do you think he's not telling you?"

"I just don't think he's going ok. Mentally. He's exhausted, clearly. I don't know why. Maybe I am reading into things though..." Nick said. Clay didn't know what to say.

"He knows you're here for him, and I hope he knows I'm here too. I think if he wants to share anything, we should let him come forward." Clay said. Nick nodded.

"He's so fucking stubborn though."

"Oh I can tell."



did y'all see dream's insta photo omg

# I didn't want to sleep anyway

## Chapter Summary

After an already exhausting day, George and Dream are forced to patrol the city until 4am. But Dream has something to tell George, something he hasn't told anyone else.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"We should separate. It would make more sense, we could actually find them quicker." G said, looking at Dream who was making a whining sound.

"But I want to hang out with yooooou." He complained. George would have rolled his eyes if he wasn't completely and utterly exhausted.

"I'll take the east." George said, turning and abruptly walking away.

"Wait, G." Dream said, running to catch up. "Please can we chat? I really really need the distraction. My mind is going crazy." Dream said.

"Well I want to be alone."

"But I deal with my emotions with distractions." Dream said with a frown.

"Ok? And? I deal with mine by bottling them up and wallowing in it. I want to be alone. So leave me alone." George said, turning and walking away, snapping and unsnapping the bow repeatedly as he walked, a habit he picked up from Dream who always clicked and unclicked his sword to annoy him.

George didn't mean to be rude with his partner. He was exhausted, stressed and had just had enough. They had beaten the teleporting villain not even 12 hours ago, and Dream and GNotFound were summoned again.

This time for a criminal who broke into the mayor's house and stole some safe. Yes, the entire safe. The mayor was absolutely pissed. George wasn't about to argue with the crazy man, instead just agreeing to help, pulling Dream out of the room who was being nosy and questioning what was even in the safe.

The mayor refused to say what was in it.

But no one had any descriptors of the person. They somehow got in and out without anyone seeing. They had somehow messed with the cameras and security too. It was planned.

This made things incredibly difficult since no one knew who they were looking for. But all roads out of the city were closed off. No one could get in or out.

However, it was also 2am. On a school night. He had a very stressful day, and all George wanted was to lie in his bed. Because realistically, he wasn't going to get any sleep.

George was walking along the rooftops, for over an hour, hearing police driving around below. Why was he here? He was just as useless as the cops. Aren't they experts at *finding* criminals.

George sat down on the edge of a rooftop of a tall building, letting his feet dangle as he looked across the city. He would just keep watch from here for a while. It would be more useful than walking around.

But from here, a specific colour did manage to catch his eye. The familiar shade of yellow on the building beside him. He could see Dream lying down on the roof, and could see his chest rising and falling slowly

George sighed and got up, doing a quick run up before leaping over the gap and landing on the same roof at Dream.

But Dream didn't move. George cocked his head to the side in confusion and walked over. When he got closer, he saw Dream's eyes were closed. *The bastard is asleep.*

George should have woken him up. They were on duty after all, trying to catch a criminal. But as George looked at his partner, who was peaceful as he rested, he didn't have the heart to.

*He must be as tired as me*

George sat down cross-legged beside Dream, looking at the stars with the comfort of his friend being next to him.

"No please don't." George heard a soft murmur. He turned his head and saw Dream twitch in his sleep.

"It's not my fault- I can't control it." Dream said softly. George stared at him. He was sleep-talking.

"No, Dad! Stop!" He said louder, turning in his sleep. George's eyes went wide and quickly shook Dream.

"Dream, wake up!" He said.

George was answered with a punch on the jaw. Dream had instinctively punched him when he was forcefully woken up. The boy was sitting there panting, looking around frantically.

George clutched his jaw, sitting away from Dream.

"G?" Dream said. George nodded, before letting his hand fall, wiggling his jaw to ease the pain. Dream's eyes went wide. "I punched you."

"I noticed."

"I'm so sorry. I- you scared me. I thought..." Dream trailed off.

"I'm sorry. I had to wake you. You were sleep talking and I couldn't let you reveal any private information."

"Oh. Right. Sorry." Dream said, looking down. "Wait, have they found the culprit yet?"

"No. I found you and decided to stay here." George said with a shrug.

"So now you want company." Dream said. George rolled his eyes.

"No. But you said you do. So I'm here."

"Oh. Well, thanks." Dream replied. And the two boys fell into a comfortable silence once again. Both minds buzzing with thoughts, each wrapped up in their own lives that they couldn't even share with the other.

George was confused at Dream's silence, since he seemed so eager to talk earlier. But decided he would wait for his friend to say something, if he really wanted to.

But it was hard to say things that didn't cross a line.

"I have a secret I can't tell anyone and it's killing me." Dream said suddenly and quickly. George glanced at him.

"And it's not the fact that I'm Dream. It's something else. Something I can't tell anyone. Not even my friends. Not without the fear of it reaching my family." He continued. George nodded, letting him speak.

"But you don't know who I am. The person I act in everyday life isn't even the real me, this is. And you're the person I trust the most..."

"Dream, you better not tell me whatever you're about to tell me." George said, turning completely to his partner. Dream bit his lip.

"I need to tell someone."

"We can't know anything about each other. I'm serious. It's a rule. L said it. And I'm saying it too. Whatever your secret is, even if no one knows it, I can't know. Your everyday life *is* the real you. That secret belongs to him, not Dream. You can't tell me anything." George said.

"No, it's a part of me. It's who I am. I need to tell someone, please G." Dream said, his voice cracking slightly in the middle.

"Dream, stop! Stop doing this. Stop sharing parts of your life. I've told you time and time again I can't know. Stop stepping over the boundaries. The line is here for a reason, for safety." George said, standing up. Dream stood up too.

"Please-"

"If you keep doing this. If you keep pushing the limit, exposing yourself. Then we have to take a step back." George said, but he just noticed the glistening in Dream's eyes. The stars reflecting easily in the tears.

"G-"

"I'm sorry, Dream. But whatever it is, you can't-"

"I'm bisexual."

There was a beat of silence, and Clay took a deep breath, looking down at his feet.

"I-I know the rules. But this has been killing me. And no one knows. And you're my friend. And I-I needed to tell *someone*. And I trust you, more than anyone in my life. I'm sorry. Im sorry." Clay said, wanting to cover his face, to hide. But the mask was there, reminding him he was already hidden.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sor-" He was cut off with a hug. Probably the last thing he was expecting in that moment was a hug. Instead of questioning it, he just immediately hugged back, clinging to G like his life depended on it. He had to angle his neck down slightly to rest his head against G's shoulder.

They hugged for a few minutes, Clay just letting some of his tears out. Tears of relief. Until finally, G stepped back and grabbed his shoulders, staring Clay in the eyes.

"That's amazing, Dream." G said softly.

"I just... I've been thinking about it a lot recently. And I really needed to tell someone. I'm sorry, G. I shouldn't have shared." Clay said.

Clay had been thinking about George. His friend had inspired him. But Clay couldn't help but be envious of him. George had his family, he had his friends. Even though people at school may not be accepting, at least he had people to support him. People to build him up.

Clay had no one.

Sure, George's friends were supportive of George. But they've known George for years. Clay isn't really their friend. George would be supportive, Nick would too. And Clay knew Karl, Fundy, Niki and Wilbur would be as well.

But it wasn't just about his friends. It was about his reputation. If it got out that, that Clay Block, the mayor's son, was bisexual, it would, in his fathers predicted words, ruin their family's reputation.

Clay would be kicked out of the house, no hesitation. His father has never been one to refrain his point of view on things. Clay knew exactly what his dad's view on the LGBTQIA+ was. He's heard extensive rants.

Maybe Drista would be supportive. But growing up listening to their father, who's to know what her opinion is.

So Clay told the one person he knew couldn't even accidentally leak it. G didn't even know who he was. And Clay didn't know him either. It was perfect.

And G wasn't disgusted, or angry.

"No, *I'm* sorry. I didn't realise what you were talking about. I just assumed it could have revealed your identity. But I'm proud of you, for telling me. And I'm glad that you trust me enough to share that. I know that wasn't an easy thing to do." G said. Clay sighed in relief.

"You're not mad? You aren't uncomfortable?" Clay asked.

"Uncomfortable? Why on earth would I be uncomfortable?" G asked in confusion. Clay shrugged.

"I don't know, maybe the comments I say sometimes." Clay murmured. But G laughed. Clay loved his laugh, it was contagious.

"I don't mind those. And also... I'm gay." G said. Clay lifted his head up straighter, a smile falling onto his face.

"Really?"

"Yeah." G laughed. Clay felt elated. *Maybe there's a chance.*

"Pogchamp." Clay said, and G laughed even more.

"Pogchamp?"

"Means I have a chance." Clay winked, and G shook his head, but the smile on his face didn't leave. *If only he knew I wasn't joking.*

"I'm sorry about your situation, feeling like you don't have people to support you." G then said, his tone changing. It made Clay's smile fall. He rubbed his arm, looking away.

"I was really lucky to have a family that supports me." Clay looked up at G.

"You're out to your family?" Clay asked, and received a nod in response. "Wow." Was all Clay could say.

"Maybe you're underestimating yours..."

"Definitely not." Clay said immediately. G gave him a sympathetic smile.

"Well, you have me." G said. Clay smiled.

"Thank you, G." Clay said, pulling the smaller hero into a hug again. G hugged him back.

"Of course."

They stayed in the hug for a while, comforted by the knowledge that they understood each other. Despite not being able to share their lives, they were in the same position, had similar secrets.

The two heroes sat on that building for another half an hour, just talking about random things, or sitting in silence, always making sure to steer clear of their lives.

"This might be a weird question, and you don't have to answer..." Clay started, and G groaned.

"I swear to God, Dream."

"I said you don't have to answer! But we've been superheroes for a year right and saved a bunch of people. Have you ever spoken to me, Dream, while you were your civilian self? Like I wouldn't know who you were." Clay tried to explain. G hesitated.

"I don't think I should answer." G said slowly. Clay nodded.

"Fair enough."

"Don't say if you have spoken to me either." G then said, and Clay nodded, with a sigh. He had. In fact, G had carried him to safety. It was literally something out of his dreams, something he had fantasised about. Something he repeats in his mind often throughout the day.

Clay looked away, across the city. He was just trying to see if he could see his school from here, but something caught his eye, and he stood up to see it better.

"What?" G said, also immediately standing up, sensing his partner's curiosity.

"Do you see that van a block away? It came out of an alleyway." Clay said, pointing.

"Let's go." G said, peering over the edge of the building, looking for the easiest way down. He found a pole, swung himself over the ledge and grabbed it, sliding down it to the ground. Clay followed the same way, and both heroes started running through the streets to where they last saw the van.

"I'll cut it off from the front." G said, and then abruptly turned down a street. Clay kept running down the same road, and could see the van ahead, even though it didn't have its lights on.

As he got closer, he saw the van speed up. They must have seen him. But Clay had enhanced speed and caught up quickly, using a nearby dumpster to jump off of, onto the top of the van. He balanced himself, even when the van tried to shake him off.

Up ahead, Clay saw G standing there, his bow and arrow aimed for the front window of the van, and the van braked immediately when they saw him with the pointed weapon.

Clay peered down through the window, and saw a hooded person at the wheel, with their hands in the air. G came running over, still pointing the bow. Clay took the hint and clicked his sword.

Dream forced open the driver's door, and dragged the person out. The hood covered their face, and they fell onto their knees, looking down. The jumper they were wearing was purple and black.

"Lower your hood." Clay said. The person slowly did, but refused to look up. Clay couldn't see their face in the light.

"What's your name." G said, but they were silent in their response. G turned to Clay, nodding at the van. Clay went to the back of the van and forced open the doors.

He was immediately met with a punch to the face, almost knocking him over. Clay turned back with his sword out, a man at the end of it.

But it wasn't a normal person. No, this person had a mask. And a costume. Clay could see their ring with the green jewel sparkling in the moonlight. The man's outfit was also green, laced with gold on the upper chest. The bottom half of his face was covered by a green gas mask, and he had a gold crown sitting atop his green spiked hair.

Clay swung out his sword, it barely missing the man's neck.

"Dream?" G called out, unable to see what was happening.

"It's a villain!" Dream replied, ducking the man kicked out with his foot. "He has no weapon though!" Clay yelled out.

"No weapon? Hm." The masked man said, but pulled something out his pocket, throwing it at Clay and immediately jumping backwards.

The vial hit Clay in the chest, and a purple liquid seeped into his suit.

Clay stared at his chest in confusion, but when a burning sensation swept across his body, his face contorted into pain and he screamed out, crumpling into a ball on the ground, covering his face.

He had his eyes squeezed tightly shut, screams still escaping through his clenched teeth as he writhed on the ground.

George meanwhile, had immediately run over to the back of the van when he heard his partner's screams of agony. He'd never heard Dream scream like that, it made his heart drop.

George looked down to see Dream tossing on the floor, one hand scratching at his chest, the other digging into the ground beside him, and his legs were kicking around like he couldn't control them.

*What did he do to him? What was this man's power?*

George immediately shot an arrow at the villain, who tried to close the doors of the van to take the hit of the arrow.

George looked into the van and saw the safe, the one described to him. It was the mayor's safe.

"What do you need with the safe? Why does Blade want it!" G yelled out, shooting another arrow which buried itself into the door.

"Blade? I thought Blade was dead!" The man yelled back. George shot another arrow.

"Liar. What is in this safe." G said.

"Nothing of importance to you." The man said back, and he throw open the door.

He was holding a backpack, and just before George could attack him, the man disappeared.

"What?" George said, still holding up his bow, aiming around.

"I'm not here for you, GNotFound." The voice came from behind. George turned and shot an arrow, but it disappeared into the darkness. No one was behind him.

"Who are you?" George said. Dream was still on the floor, now sobbing from the pain. George wanted to go to him, but he didn't know where the villain went.

"You can call me Awesamdude." He said.

"Awesomedude?"

"I don't want to fight you, GNotFound." He continued to speak, his voice now to the left of George, who was spinning around, confused out of his mind.

"What do you want in the safe? What did you do to Dream?"

"The safe is none of your concern, I've got what I wanted, you can have the safe back. Dream will be fine in a few minutes, it was my weapon, a potion of harming. Similar to your arrows I can summon that potion type. My jewel's power however, invisibility." Awesamdude said.

"Give me your jewel, you don't have to listen to the Blade." George said.

"The Blade? I don't know why you think I work for him, but I don't. I'm leaving now, so just take the safe back to the mayor. No problems." He said.

"What did you take?"

"Nothing important. Good day, GNotFound." Awesamdude said, but George still couldn't see him.

George quickly ran to the front of the van, and saw the driver still there. He looked up at him for one second, but then disappeared too. George still didn't catch his face, the shadows conveniently falling across him. The only thing he noticed was the lack of hair.

"What!" George yelled, running to where he was.



"Pretty cool power, isn't it!" Awesamdude yelled from far away. George put his hands on his head in frustration.

He lost a villain, who stole from the mayor. And Dream...

Dream.

George turned and ran back to the boy who was whimpering on the ground. George put a hand on his shoulder.

"Dream? Dream." George said. The boy just groaned, his eyes still clenched shut.

"It's ok, it'll pass soon." George said, pulling Dream's upper body into his lap. Dream reached blindly for something, and it took George a second to realise he wanted his hand. So George hesitantly brought his hand to Dream's, who immediately grabbed it, intertwining their fingers and holding it tightly.

"It's ok, you're ok. *I've got you.*" George said, unsure of how else to comfort his partner who was in an immeasurable amount of pain. George rubbed the outside of Dream's thumb with his, in an attempt to reassure him.

He brought his other hand to Dream's bright blonde hair, letting his fingers carefully thread through it.

They stayed like that for several minutes, waiting for the pain to go.

Dream let out a final groan, letting go of George's hand, instead rolling closer into his lap and wrapping his arms around George's waist.

"Um. Dream?" George said, unsure of what Dream was doing.

"You make it go away." Dream mumbled, holding George tighter. George couldn't help but smile slightly. He could hear the exhaustion in Dream's voice, either from lack of sleep or from the pain, but he was really clearly out of it.

"Ok. Let's get this safe back to the mayor and then we can go home and sleep." George said. Dream just mumbled again but George missed what he said.

"That means you will have to let go of me." George chuckled. In all honesty, he didn't mind the affection. He liked how close him and Dream were after a year. They've become really good friends despite not knowing much about each other.

"Ok, I'll tell you what. You can go home and sleep, I'll deal with the mayor." George said, putting his hands on Dream's shoulders and pushing him off slightly. Dream reluctantly let go and rolled off George, sighing before sitting himself up.

"Wait. Where'd the green and gold guy go?" Dream asked, looking around. George took note of the real colours.

"He had invisibility, and left. Said he doesn't work for Blade and wasn't here to hurt us. He took something from the safe and then took the driver and they both disappeared." George said. Dream nodded slowly but it didn't seem like much information went in.

"Ok. You go home and rest. It's like 4am." George said, standing up and pulling Dream to his feet too, trying not to be resentful at the height difference he momentarily forgot about.

"Ok. Thanks, G. Love you. Goodnight." Dream said sleepily with a yawn, before walking away down the street.

George stifled a laugh. *Love you* Dream had said. *Well, he's clearly out of it.*

George turned back to the van, and looked at the safe which was shut, but had clearly been forced open somehow.

He took a deep breath in as he prepared himself for a lecture.

Oh well. It's not like he would have gotten much sleep anyways.

## Chapter End Notes

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# Maybe I don't know you

## Chapter Summary

George was avoiding Clay all day, so he decides to visit him as Dream to see what's really going on

## Chapter Notes

TW// homophobic slur (censored)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"I think he's dead." George heard someone loudly whisper. He just groaned in response.

"George." Nick said, and the boy lifted his head. Nick narrowed his eyes.

"Sleep?"

"No."

"George!"

"Not my fault." George defended himself, propping his head up on the table with his wrist. They were currently in English class.

"You look awful."

"Thanks!" George said, smiling but with venom in his eyes.

"To be fair, I didn't sleep much last night either, I think I fell asleep around 3. Did you hear about the robbery? Dream and GNotFound had to help, I was watching the news but fell asleep at my computer." Nick said.

"I did hear, yes." George said.

"Apparently something was stolen from the mayor. I remember waking up at like midnight because of sirens passing my house. I was scared, thought they were going to bust me for my sherbet empire." Quackity said.

"It's sugar, Quackity. Not real drugs. You're fine, it's just weird." George rolled his eyes. Quackity pulled some sherbet straws out of his pocket.

"Want one?"

"No."

"Wait, the mayor? We should ask Clay what happened." Skeppy said.

"We can't pry, it's his business." Darryl said.

"Yeah it could be classified. Who knows what's in that safe." George said, rubbing his eyes.

"Safe? What safe?" Nick asked. George's eyes widened behind his hands as he realised what he said.

"Um. Didn't the news say it was a safe that had been stolen?" George said, panicking.

"Oh. Maybe it did, I'll check." Nick said.

"No need! Hey, what was Mrs Harvey saying? I haven't been able to concentrate." George said.

"I think she was talking about context." Darryl said. George turned to the front of the room, where the young teacher was talking to the class.

"It's very important, not only in writing but also in everyday life. Think about anytime you've seen your teachers outside of school. It's weird right? Like you wouldn't expect them to have a normal life, or doing shopping at the supermarket. In fact, you might not even recognise them. Especially if they are wearing something completely different to what they usually wear. You just aren't expecting them to be there, so why would they be? Context is everything." She said.

"All I hear is gibberish." George whispered to his friends.

"Have you ever met someone but swear you've seen them before, or heard them before? But you can't put your finger on it? That's because the context has changed, you know that person by where they were, how they were dressed and how they acted. Why would they be different in a different setting?" Mrs Harvey continued. George squinted at her, as if it would help him absorb the information.

"What does this have to do with english?" Quackity scoffed.

There was a knock at the door, and everyone turned to the source. George furrowed his eyebrows when he saw Dr Puffy.

"Sorry to interrupt Mrs Harvey. I was wondering if I could borrow Mr Davidson for a moment?" She said. Now everyone turned to the back of the classroom to look at him. George gulped as he felt their stares.

The kid right in front of him snickered, whispering to his friend. The whispering has happened a lot today with random people throughout the school.

George took a deep breath and stood up, to walk to Puffy.

"Bring your bag George." Puffy said. George slowly turned back around, and took the bag from Nick who held it up for him.

"The f\*g needs to see a shrink, how sad." He heard the laughing kid say, and his friends laughed.

"Shut the fuck up, Jarrod." George heard Nick's voice, but he just shook his head and left the room with Puffy.

"You know, these meetings are to improve my attendance. But taking me out of class is kind of detrimental, don't you think." George said, voicing the words he had been thinking the past few days.

"I agree, but we only meet once a week. Except this time I felt like we needed to talk about something else. Why don't we go to my office and we can discuss there." She said. George shrugged. It's not like he was missing much, if his mind wasn't present in the classroom anyways.

They walked the halls in silence. It was making George feel very anxious. Why did she want to talk to him? Had she heard about the rumour? She might have, things spread quickly and the school didn't take the news extremely well.

When they finally reached her office, George sat down in the same beanbag as last time, taking a deep breath as he relaxed his heavy body.

"How has your mission been going?" She asked, grabbing her iPad and sitting across from him.

"Mission?"

"Eating lunch everyday."

"Oh. Right. I've brought packed lunches the past few days, and eaten them." George said with a shrug. A grin spread out on Puffy's face.

"Excellent work George. I'm very impressed." She said. George shrugged again. It wasn't that big of a deal.

"Why am I here Puffy?" He asked. She sighed.

"I heard some news spreading around the school about you. I wanted to check in with how you were going, and if it was true." She said. George knew it.

"Yeah, I'm gay." He said. She smiled.

"Thank you for telling me. You seem quite comfortable with sharing that information." She said.

"Well I've had to get used to it, since the entire world seems to know now." George sighed.

"How long have you known you were gay? Did any of your close friends or family know before?" She asked curiously. George smiled slightly.

"I've known for a while. My best friend has known for years too. I told some of my other friends recently. And my family two nights ago." He said.

"Two nights? So the night before you were outed?" She asked, and he nodded. "How did they take it?"

"Really well. They proceeded to bully me about my crush." He said with a fond smile recalling the conversation. Puffy smiled at him.

"That's amazing, George. I'm really happy for you that you have that support." She said. George shrugged, not knowing how to respond.

"So this might be a loaded question, but how did you feel about it getting out? Are you ok? Do you feel isolated? Maybe relieved it's not a secret anymore? I want to know how the news has affected you." She said.

"I don't know. I'm fine." He said simply.

"How did you find out?"

"Well, I was with my friend who was insisting we avoid the cafeteria for some reason, and then someone walked past and called me the f slur. So I kind of just put two and two together that it got out." He said.

"Who was that student that said that?" Her face changing to stern. It frightened George slightly seeing kind Puffy look serious.

"Um, I don't know." He said. Her lips formed a straight line as she wrote something on the iPad.

"And your friends that didn't know? How did they take it?" She said. George thought about it. Tommy was great. He hasn't had a chance to speak to Tubbo alone yet but the younger boy had sent George a smile when he saw him yesterday. Clay... Clay *hugged* him. Even though for a second George thought he was disgusted.

"They were amazing. I'm really lucky to have them." George said.

"So your family, your best friend and a few other friends knew. Did any of them tell anyone else?" She asked. George shook his head.

"They wouldn't do that."

"So you don't have any idea how it got out? We take bullying very seriously, and being outed without your control is considered a form of that. Spreading someone's private information against their will." She said.

George knew who it was. He knew as soon as he saw her, as soon as Violet had told Clay. She was the one that found out and spread it. She was nearby when he told Nick he had told his parents. She also gave him a weird look before she walked away.

He has no idea why she did it, but he knows it was Violet.

"No. I have no clue." George said firmly. Puffy slowly nodded, eyeing him, before jotting something on her iPad.

"I'm guessing you didn't sleep much last night." She said. George sighed.

"I don't look that bad do I?"

"No, but I just assumed you would have been overthinking about the whole situation. I don't think anyone could sleep that easily after that eventful day. Plus the villain that sent the school into lockdown."

"Yeah, I guess you could say that." He said. He was definitely thinking about everything, but he was not at home.

"Did you sleep at all? Was it restless sleep?"

"Um. Maybe I got half an hour? But I gave up sleeping. It's not like I get good sleep anyways, I get nightmares and wake up constantly. I just decided to stay up until morning." He said.

"What sort of nightmares?"

"I don't know, all kinds."

"How often?"

"Every time I sleep."

"How often do you wake up in the night if you do get to sleep?" She asked. George didn't like this interrogation. He swore they already did this last time.

"Like every hour or half an hour, I don't know. That's if I can even fall asleep." He said. Puffy looked at him.

"How long has all this been going on? The nightmares, bad sleep, sleep deprivation, all of it." She asked. George thought about it.

"I mean, the past few months have been extra bad. Before that it was ok, maybe just a few all-nighters but that's just high school things. But I guess the past few months.... they've been awful." He admitted. Puffy nodded, writing it down on her iPad.

"Ok. I'm going to ask you something but you're allowed to say no." She said, the preface making George nervous.

"Ok..."

"Would you be comfortable with me giving your parents another call so they can get you a doctors appointment. I think you could have chronic insomnia." She said.

George stared at her. Insomnia?

"No, I don't have insomnia, I just..." He thought about it. No, he doesn't. It's not that he doesn't sleep, it's that he's preoccupied with other things. I mean sure, even when he does have free nights, he can't really get good sleep. Mostly for fear an alert will happen and he'll miss it. Or for fear of nightmares. Or he has to study. Or just unable to sleep. But it's not insomnia. It's just bad habits.

Right?

"At least get confirmation with a doctor. They can help, George. Get you some medication to help you sleep. And we can work on plans to fix it. I know it doesn't seem like an issue to you, you think you're functioning ok. But it's affecting your day, isn't it. Difficulty concentrating? Low energy? Low motivation? Maybe headaches? Loss of appetite?" She said.

Ok so maybe he did feel that, but it wasn't a proper disorder he had. Right? He was just a busy guy.

"Can I give your parents a call?" She asked. George thought about it.

"Ok, but don't tell them about my sexuality being spread around the school. They don't need to know that, and you said you won't share anything in these sessions without my permission." He said. She nodded.

"Ok. I won't. You can share yourself if you wish." She said.

"Is that all?" George asked. She looked at him again.

"You still haven't told me how you feel about everything. Do you feel safe in the school?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. I have my friends and family. That's all I need. And now that the cats out of the bag, I can be myself. I'm fine, Puffy." He said. She bit her lip in thought.

"Ok. I'll see you on Monday. But if you want to tell me anything, you can. I won't tell anyone, remember." She said. George stood up.

"Puffy, if something was wrong, I would tell people." George lied. He lied straight to her face and didn't even feel bad as he left.

He's gotten good at lying.

•

"George!" Clay grinned when he saw the brunette in the hall. The smaller boy sent a small, tight-lip smile before turning around and walking away. Clay furrowed his eyebrows, and someone put a hand on his shoulder.

"You good?" Wilbur asked. Clay stared after George who disappeared around the corner.

"Is he avoiding me?" Clay thought out loud.

"Why would he?"

"I don't know, every time I've seen him today he goes in a different direction or starts talking with people." Clay said. Wilbur looked at Clay curiously.

"He's probably just keeping to himself, after what happened. He might not even realise. I haven't had a chance to talk to him, is he doing alright?" Wilbur asked.

"He said he was fine. But maybe you're right. He might just be preoccupied." Clay sighed. He thought he was getting close to George, but it seems like the other boy wants nothing to do with him.

He barely knows anything about George because he doesn't share much with Clay. They haven't been friends for that long, but Clay thought they had gotten closer than this.

"We have math now right? I'll check on him there." Clay said, Wilbur nodding in agreement, and the pair walked down the hallway to their class.

When Clay arrived, he saw Nick sitting down, but George wasn't here. He left Wilbur and went to Nick.

"Where's George?" He asked. Nick looked up.

"Oh, he left English for an appointment with the guidance councillor." Nick said.

"But I just saw him in the hallway..." Clay said. Nick furrowed his eyebrows.

"Where did he go?"

"I don't know, I didn't see. I think he's avoiding me. I assumed he came here but..." Clay looked around. No sign of the brit. "Mrs Arley isn't here yet. I'll go find him." Clay said.

"He's probably fine, Clay. You don't have to chase after him again." Nick sighed.

"But-"

"He wants space. Trust me, I know George. He doesn't like talking about things and he hates pity. I tried bringing up the whole thing this morning but he got mad at me, telling me to stop bringing it up, it wasn't a big deal, and it's none of my business how he feels." Nick said, resting his chin on his arm propped up against the table.



Clay sat down in George's seat, giving Nick a concerned look.

"You guys are in a fight?"

"No, we continued like usual, in English. But I'm worried I'll say something again to make him upset. I just wish he would tell me if something is wrong, I usually have to pry the information out. I don't think he's doing as well as he says he is." Nick said. Clay nodded, listening.

"He saw Dr Puffy right? If anything is wrong, he might confide in her." Clay said. Nick frowned.

"Would he tell a complete stranger over me?" Nick said. Clay didn't know what to respond.

George opened up a tiny bit to Dream. Of all people, a masked man he didn't know.

"I'll go find him." Clay said, standing up. But at the same moment, Mrs Arley entered the room, a brunette boy beside her. George was looking at the floor, and she had a hand on his shoulder.

"I will be calling your parents to make sure." She said to him. He nodded and made his way over to Clay and Nick. Clay stood up, since he was in George's seat, and they all had assigned seating.

When George reached the table, he looked up and Clay and Nick both gasped.

George had an already slightly bruising eye and a split lip.

"George!" Clay exclaimed, as the brunette sat down in his seat and pulled out his stuff.

"What happened?" Nick said, grabbing George's chin and tilting it towards him. George pulled away, opening up his notebook instead.

"I'm fine, just tripped." George said. Clay looked at Nick, it was clear neither of them believed it.

"Mr Block, please sit down." Mrs Arley said. Clay looked back at George.

"He needs to go to the nurse." Clay said. Mrs Arley sighed with a nod.

"I said no. I can't miss anymore classes." George said, still not looking at his friends. The entire class was now watching the interaction.

"He was adamant. And he's right, he's missed too much math class to afford to miss more. It was just a slip in the bathroom, if he says he's fine, he's fine. I'm going to give his parents a ring just to be sure." The teacher said. Clay made a noise of rebuttal, but George grabbed his sleeve.

"Sit down, Clay. I'm not going anywhere." He said, but with slight anger in his tone. Clay tensed his jaw but sat down in his usual seat, still watching George, who took a deep breath and began to write.

Clay made eye contact with Nick, who silently sighed and shrugged, also opening his notebook to begin writing.

What the hell happened to George.

•

"You said he fell?" His mother said into the phone. George sat silently on the couch as she spoke to his math teacher. Lorna was rightfully concerned when her son arrived to the car with a swollen eye and split lip.

When she finished the call, she looked at George again, with narrowed eyes.

"You would tell me if something more was going on?" She said. George didn't respond, and she sat down beside him.

"Did somebody do this to you? Are you being bullied? Is this why your attendance has been bad?" She asked. George was about to respond but she continued.

"I wasn't expecting two calls about my son today. One from Dr Puffy and one from Mrs Arley." She said. George slowly nodded.

"What did, um... what did Puffy say?"

"She told me that you know what she said. I didn't realise your sleep was that bad, George. So, I've booked you an appointment with a Doctor to see if it's insomnia. But honey, I didn't have any idea. I feel like I've missed so many things, I should have realised you were struggling at school and with sleep." She said.

"Mom, it's not your fault. I'm fine. It's not as bad as it seems." George tried to reassure her.

"See, I don't know if I can trust that. You don't have to tell me everything in your life, George. But you do know that it's my job to protect you and make sure you're ok, right? There's nothing you can tell me that would make me hate you. I just want what's best for you." She said. George felt his eyes begin to burn, and he looked at his hands. He didn't mean to make his mother feel like this.

"I'm just really tired." George said softly.

"From lack of sleep?" His mom asked carefully. He shrugged.

"Tired of everything. I'm just so exhausted all the time." He said. She put an arm around his shoulders.

"Well we can see the Doctor and maybe they can help with it." She said. George nodded. "Maybe medication to help you sleep."

"Wait, no I don't want medication." George said immediately. He couldn't do that, he had to be on-call at all times. He *had* to be awake.

"We can see what our options are." Lorna said, placing a kiss on the top of George's head.

•

Later, George sat on the end of his bed, staring out his window. He checked the time. 12am. He had tried going to sleep at a reasonable time, like his mom suggested. But he just couldn't.

His body was screaming for sleep, but his twisted mind denied him the relief. No matter how tired he was, his mind was too busy, too crowded.

So when he saw a familiar figure in the street with a smiley face staring up at his window, his first thought was that he was hallucinating. He's finally reached his limit.

After an entire minute of him staring at the distant figure, George finally processed that it was real when Dream gave him a wave.

George's eyes went wide and he ran to his window, opening it up. Dream put a finger to his lips, and pointed at the roof. George nodded, glancing back into his room for a second, and then turning

back to see Dream had disappeared.

George leaned out the window to see where he went, but he was gone. *Ok, maybe it was a hallucination.*

But a few seconds later, when he felt someone grab him from under his arms and pull him up, he didn't even scream. He just gasped at the sudden movement. And when his feet touched the roof, he spun around to see Dream standing there, a grin on his face.

"Hey Georgie." He said. George stared at him.

"What are you doing here Dream?" George asked, the confusion in his voice clear as day.

"Bored." The blonde man shrugged, before sitting down on the roof. George hesitated, but sat down beside him.

"Did you know I would be awake?" George asked, crossing his legs.

"No, I was just walking the neighbourhood and wondered if maybe you were." He shrugged. George nodded.

"So there's no villain or anything right? You're just..."

"Just going for a nightly stroll." Dream finished, looking up at the stars and leaning back on his arm.

"I heard you were out all night last night? Aren't you exhausted?" George asked carefully. Dream shrugged.

"I mean, yeah a little bit. But I got like 2 hours sleep before the alert went out, about an hour while on patrol, don't tell anyone, and then I got another 2 hours before I had to get up. So not the worst. And I'm planning on going home soon anyways, so I'll catch up." Dream shrugged.

George stared at him. He thought of all people, Dream would have the same issues with sleep he did.

"How much sleep do you normally get?" George asked, curious. Dream thought about it.

"Depends. If there's no alert of anything, then maybe 7 hours? If there is, I can usually manage to squeeze in a solid 4. Occasionally some all-nighters. But I nap after school. Shit. I mean.... pretend you didn't hear that I go to school." Dream said.

"You.... you get a lot more sleep than I thought you would..." George said, trailing off, considering the sleep he himself had had.

"I mean, being a superhero is time consuming and sometimes it gets in the way of things. But I try to make up time. Like catching up on school in the mornings or afternoons. Making sure I eat regularly, sleeping too. Can't function properly if I don't sleep." Dream chuckled. George looked away.

"Are you ok?" Dream asked the boy. George nodded. "Are you actually ok or is that just your natural response to that question?" Dream asked. George turned to him, but looked down and shrugged.

"I mean. I'm ok... like everything is fine. I just... I don't know." He started to say. Dream nodded

for him to continue. "I guess I'm just a bit... overwhelmed. Still." George added.

"Why?"

"Well..." George took a deep breath. "I came out as gay to my family two nights ago..."

"That's great, George. Thanks for telling me." Dream said with a smile, a little shocked George willingly told him, a masked stranger. George sent him a small smile back, but it quickly disappeared.

"But um... somehow the whole school f-found out." George said, his voice shaking a bit. He was confused at his own reaction. He took another deep breath to compose himself. "It's not like I care that much. It's just who I am... I-I-" George let out a unintentional sob, and covered his face. "Sorry." He said, the sound muffled by his hands.

Clay was shocked. He didn't know what to do. How do you comfort someone you know, but also don't know, and they don't know you know.

"Don't be sorry. Take your time, it's ok." Clay decided, slowly moving closer to George, who was wiping his face, trying to stop the tears.

"No, it's dumb. Why am I crying right now? You don't even know me and I'm just crying." George said, laughing a bit through the pain. He pulled his knees to his chest, as if to shield himself from Dream's pity.

"It's ok to cry. And I think you're crying to me because I don't know you." Clay said... feeling a little guilty that he actually did know George. Is it fair to him?

"You have other things to do, you don't have to be my therapist. I don't want to burden you." George said, shaking his head in shame at his own breakdown.

"Sharing things with friends or people doesn't make you a burden. I'm here because I care."

"But why do you care? You're *Dream*!" George said, gesturing to the green hero.

"Ok? You're George!" Clay replied with a small chuckle, also gesturing to the smaller boy.

"But what does that *mean*." George said, slightly softer.

"It means... it means you're just as important as the next person. Just because you don't have superpowers or a mask, doesn't mean you aren't worth listening to. I like listening to you." Clay said.

George was quiet, thinking. He was trying to stop tears falling from his eyes because *there was no reason to cry*. But there was, and it's been bugging George for days.

"I'm going to ask again, and I want an honest answer." Clay said, George already knowing what the question will be. "Are you ok?"

George took a deep, shaky breath, but finally caved.

"...no." He whispered, and covered his face again. "I-I don't think I am." He added softly.

"And that's ok." Clay said, in a similar soft tone.

"It's just... it's just *everything*. It took so much to come out to my parents. I was so scared, but for

nothing. They were amazing. It was such a big relief, like a weight off my chest. But I barely had time to get used to that, and then suddenly the entire school knows. And-and people hate me. I don't know them, it shouldn't matter, but they say things and it hurts. A lot. To know that I'm not accepted by s-so many people." George said.

Clay's face softened as he let George rant.

"My friends think I don't care about it. They think I'm handling it great. They think maybe I'm a little overwhelmed, getting used to it. But they don't know how much it hurts, to know that everyone is thinking the same thing, and they all hate me."

"And the worst part is. Even though everyone knows one of my biggest secrets. I.... I *still* feel like I'm not myself. I still feel like no one knows me. I'm hiding stuff. From everyone important in my life. There isn't a single person that can confidently say they know me." George said, his hands threading through his hair constantly as he spoke, finally saying everything that has been bothering him, while tears streamed down his face.

"I know you." Clay said, oh so softly. George looked at him and shook his head.

"No. You really, *really* don't." He said with a humourless laugh.

Clay couldn't respond. The truth was, he didn't really know George all that well. The fact that his friend refuses to tell Nick everything that's wrong, there's no way Clay knows much about him.

"I was outed. And it's... it's not... *fair*. It wasn't fair." George said, allowing the words that he had been denying to come to the surface. He was trying to convince himself it was ok, this would happen eventually. But the truth was that it really wasn't fair.

"You're right. It's not fair." Clay said, his voice getting softer every time he spoke, treading carefully, not wanting to break whatever this space was between them, where George felt comfortable to share.

George glanced at him then covered his face again. Clay has noticed he does that a lot.

"What happened to your eye and lip?" Clay asked the question that had been bothering him all day. George uncovered his face, a finger going to his lip.

"I fell."

"Is that actually what happened or is that the lie you told people?" Clay asked. George looked away.

"Well, it's not a *complete* lie. I did fall. But I didn't slip..." George said.

"Someone did this to you?"

"Maybe." George shrugged, fiddling with his shoelaces.

"That's not ok, George."

"I'm fine though."

"No you're fucking not. Look at your face! Whoever did that deserves-"

"Ok? What are you going to do about it? Come to my school and use your powers and sword to get revenge on the one kid that went a bit far? It's not a big deal, Dream. This is why I didn't want to

tell my friends." George said.

"Why?"

"Cause they'll react like that! It'll make things worse. Everyone will move on in a week anyway." George said.

"Maybe they should know-"

"No they shouldn't. You don't know my friends." George scoffed.

"That one guy Nick was really worried after the school incident...." Clay said.

"Proof that he'll overreact and get himself in trouble." George said with a scoff.

"What about..." Clay tried to think of anyone else he has interacted with as Dream. But he couldn't.

"I'll do it for you. Darryl will go to the principal. Skeppy and Quackity will get themselves expelled along with Nick. Tommy will try to do something dumb and Tubbo will be focused on stopping him." George said, counting off on his fingers.

"Is that... is that all your friends?"

"Well, no. I mean, there's Clay but he doesn't know me well enough to do anything, you know? Like he's nice, and sweet and he cares. But he wouldn't go out of his way to do something for someone he barely knows. For someone who acts all weird and socially awkward around him." George sighed, pulling his knees closer to his chest. "So to summarise, my friends will overreact. Landing themselves in trouble and me as more of a target."

Clay furrowed his eyebrows and looked down. *He thinks that low of me? He thinks I wouldn't want to help? But we're friends.*

Clay suddenly felt an overwhelming feeling of guilt. George is here, exposing himself, letting down his walls to someone he thinks he doesn't know, to someone he thinks doesn't know him.

He wouldn't tell Nick these things, there's no way he'd tell Clay. But here Clay is, asking and probing into his life.

Dream stood up suddenly, and George turned to him, looking up in slight confusion.

"Your friends would want what's best for you. You should tell them if something's wrong, not so they can try to fix it, but so they can be there to support you. I'm sorry, George. But I have to go." Dream said, looking at the streetlamp and not at George.

"Oh. Ok. I'm sorry." George said. Dream looked at him again.

"Why are you sorry?"

"Cause you had to listen to that." George said.

"Don't be sorry. I'm glad you felt you could tell me." Dream said. George thought he could hear another emotion in his tone, but he couldn't quite place it. "And I'm the one who should be sorry." Dream muttered at the end, but it went unheard by George.

"What?"

"Nothing. Bye George." Dream said, giving the brunette a wave, before running up and jumping onto the roof of the next house.

"Bye Dream." George said, his voice trailing off in the darkness that suddenly surrounded him. The deafening silence of the empty street suddenly felt eerie, it's mocking reminder that he was alone.

In his life where he is blessed with family and friends that care for him, he was somehow still alone. No one understood.

He just needed one person. If only one person knew. Knew *everything*.

## Chapter End Notes

I really wanna change the world  
but can't change my clothes

# You don't belong here

## Chapter Summary

George has a run-in with some teens who are less than accepting

## Chapter Notes

CW// homophobic slur (censored)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Hey, Mom." George said in the car on the way to school. His mom hummed in indication he could continue. "So you know how I'm grounded..."

"What plans have your friends made." His mother sighed.

"I was actually wondering if I could hang out with a new friend. For tutoring. He's in my computer science class and struggling with coding. He asked if maybe we could form a study group. So I was wondering if I could some time this week. I know I'm grounded but it's for school. And a new friend." George said. He revived a text from Xavier this morning asking if he was still grounded. George was shocked to see a text from him, assuming that he, along with seemingly everyone, hates him since he was gay.

"Who is this friend?" She asked.

"His name is Xavier."

"Ok, fine. Just because it's for school, and at our house." She said. George smiled.

"Thanks mom."

"See? You're so slack with him." Lexi voiced from the backseat.

"Don't start this now Lexi." Lorna sighed, as they finally arrived at the school. Lexi huffed and got out of the car. "When are you going to meet this boy?" Lorna asked George before he could get out.

"I'm not sure, I'll check."

"Ok. Well have a good day sweetie." She said. George gave her a kiss on the cheek before leaving the car.

George sighed as he looked at the school, dreading another day. It was Monday. The weekend went extremely quickly, as usual. George didn't mean to ignore some of his friend's messages. He just could barely find the energy to join a discord call, or reply to the group chat's pointless memes. He spoke to Nick a couple of times, since the boy insisted he respond.



George was more in shock that there wasn't a single alert for GNotFound and Dream. Not a single one. He thought there would be for the safe, but alas. Maybe the Mayor had grilled him enough the night he returned the empty box.

Of course the days he is *actually* free, nothing happens. It's like the universe waits until George has stuff to do before disrupting his day.

He had his weekly meeting with Puffy again today, and he was dreading it again. He has a scheduled doctor's appointment later this week, so he had no clue what they would talk about.

He felt like he had something else today, something important. But couldn't for the life of him remember what it was.

He was on his way to the reception to go to his appointment, when he heard his name be called. He turned to see Clay jogging over, a smile on his face. George froze, contemplating running away.

He didn't want to talk to Clay. Maybe now Clay knew he was gay, he would interpret George's mannerisms and behaviour towards him as him liking him. Which was true, but George couldn't afford Clay knowing that he was crushing on him. And he also knew Clay was going to ask who his crush it now, since it's obviously not actually a girl.

So George decided his best option was to spend as little time as possible with him. But he was cornered now.

"I feel like I haven't spoken to you in ages." Clay said when he reached his side. George nervously fiddled with his bag strap.

"Oh. Um. I was busy over the weekend." George lied.

"That's ok. You excited for biology? How is your report coming along?"

"I'm not going to bio. I have my appointment." George said. Clay nodded, making a sound of realisation.

"Oh, I forgot about that." He said.

"And my report is going ok. I had a bit of time to work on it over the weekend. What about you?" George asked.

"Not great. I have no clue how to structure it, and I'm confused between our hypotheses. Why are there two?"

"One's a null hypothesis."

"Why do we need null hypothesis? It's a waste of space!" Clay exclaimed, making George smile slightly.

"Yeah, but it's important."

"Nothing about this project is important. When's it due?"

"I'm not sure. A week or two?" George said, receiving a groan in response. Clay seemed to have a lot of energy today.

"That's not long enough." He said. George shrugged as they continued their walk. Clay fell silent, and awkwardness began to fill George up.

"Um. So I'm gonna go this way. I'll see you at history?" George said, trying to escape Clay.

"Yeah, see you then." Clay said, giving George a small wave as he turned and walked away. George breathed out in relief and continued to the reception.

•

His appointment didn't really go anywhere. Puffy was still trying to figure out who said the f slur to him, and was mostly asking what could make him feel more comfortable at the school. Not much could at this point. She also was happy to hear that he has a doctor's appointment booked for Wednesday, to talk about his sleep.

George was actually on time to history this week, and was extremely confused to see Clay already sitting at the back next to where he usually sat. George made his way to the back, but was stopped by Wilbur in the front row, who stood up.

"Good to see you George. Just wanted to check in. I think it's pogggers that you're gay. And I think this is going to start something in this school. I think you being out and proud will encourage others to as well. I can feel it." Wilbur said. George was surprised, he really didn't know Wilbur well at all.

"Thanks, Wilbur." George said. "But I don't think I'm that influential to help other people come out." George added.

"It just takes one person to start it. There was a massive stigma around the community in this school, but you've taken the step, whether intentional or not, to show that it is normal. I have a good feeling about this." He grinned, hitting George on the back.

George gave him a small, half-hearted smile before continuing to his seat, where Clay greeted him.

"What did Wilbur say?"

"Oh. Um. He just said it was pogggers that I'm gay. And something dumb, along the lines of me starting a movement of people coming out." George said, a small laugh following the ridiculous statement that he, George Davidson, could ever make that big of an impact somewhere, without his goggles.

"I don't think that's stupid. I bet some people have already come out, whether to themselves or a close friend. Because they were inspired by you." Clay said with sincerity.

"That's ridiculous. Why would someone be inspired by my unintentional exposure? It shouldn't have been a big deal in the first place, but this school is so... sheltered." George said.

"I think you've done more than you know. We are just yet to see the effects." Clay said, with a shrug.

"But I haven't even done anything. I didn't even intentionally come out."

"You have though. Who knows, George. You could be someone's hero, just by walking around, being proud of who you are. You just being proud of yourself is so inspiring."

"A hero? Really? I don't see a suit or mask or weapon anywhere. No super strength, no super speed, no superpowers." George scoffed. He wasn't GNotFound, he didn't have his powers. How could he make an impact on anything just as George?

"You don't need a mask to make a difference." Clay said.

"Whatever you say." George laughed, shaking his head at ridiculousness of it all.

Mr Bell entered the room and everyone went silent. "Alright. I've emailed each of you a video I want you to watch. The projector doesn't work in this classroom so can you guys watch it all now in pairs please." He said. George looked at Clay who smiled and pulled out his air pods, handing the left one to George.

The video was incredibly boring. A documentary about some revolution or another. Clay was trying to pay attention, but it was difficult to concentrate. This often happens during class, or any time during the day. Fidgeting, sometimes a lot of excess energy, sometimes no energy at all.

Like right now, his foot was tapping against the table leg like it usually does, and he was tapping his pen on his chin at a slightly slower beat.

It took him a second to notice a slight pressure on his shoulder and a tickling against his neck. He slightly turned his head to see George. The brunette was leaning against his shoulder, his fluffy hair brushing against his neck. Clay leaned forward slightly and saw the boy had his eyes closed.

George had fallen asleep, on Clay's shoulder. Clay smiled slightly, stopping his fidgeting and relaxing so George was comfortable. He chuckled slightly, *George must be exhausted.*

He lowered the volume of the documentary, and shifted his shoulder lower so the shorter boy didn't have to strain his neck.

*"Is that... is that all your friends?"*

*"Well, no. I mean, there's Clay but he doesn't know me well enough to do anything, you know? Like he's nice, and sweet and he cares. But he wouldn't go out of his way to do something for someone he barely knows."*

Clay decided he would make sure George knows he cares. George was a good person, he was nice, smart, cared about his friends. He always protected them, and his family. George was a friend worth keeping.

At the end of the lesson, when the documentary finished, George still hadn't woken up. The bell rang, but the boy didn't even move. Clay chuckled, leaning slightly to take his airpod out of George's ear.

"George." He whispered, poking him slightly in the shoulder. George hummed, eyes still closed. "It's lunch time."

"Wh-what?" George said sleepily, moving his head and finally opening his eyes. After a second, his head shot up, and he turned to Clay with wide eyes.

"Clay, I'm so so sorry I didn't realise I was leaning on you. I was asleep."

"It's fine George." Clay laughed, but George was bright red.

"I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable." George added, and Clay stopped laughing in confusion.

"Uncomfortable? If I was uncomfortable I would have moved you."

"I'm sorry." George said again.

"George, it's ok, I swear." Clay said, trying to reassure the boy with a smile. George nodded, picking up his things, and they both stood up to leave.

Wilbur, Fundy and Karl were waiting by the door for Clay. Wilbur and Fundy were messing around, Wilbur having stolen Fundy's phone. Karl was just laughing as he watched, but he turned to Clay and George when they got closer.

"Hey, George. I haven't had a chance to see you." Karl said, walking over and giving George a hug, surprising him slightly. "I think it's really awesome how you've handled everything." Karl said softly. George smiled as they pulled apart. Karl must be a hugger, even though they haven't really spoken all that much. Not as much as Nick.

"Thanks Karl."

"Oh, hey George! Really cool that you're gay and all." Fundy said, after grabbing back his phone and turning to George.

"Thanks Fundy." George laughed slightly. He was getting uncomfortable for the praise that he didn't feel like he deserved. He didn't choose this, he didn't do the hard thing of telling everyone.

"Do you guys want to go to lunch now?" Clay asked, and everyone nodded. The five of them all left the history classroom and made their way to the cafeteria. Each second they got closer, George got more anxious. He hated some of the stares he received last time, he didn't want the attention.

"I'm just gonna go to the bathroom. I'll see you guys later." George said, giving them all a wave. Clay turned to him.

"You'll be ok?" He asked. George nodded.

"Why wouldn't I be?" He said, turning around and leaving. He let out a breath once he separated from the small group. He needed a few minutes to collect his thoughts.

When he made it to the bathroom, he splashed water on his face from the sink, thankful that there was no one else in the room. He pulled out his phone, checking for any alerts or messages. But there wasn't any, just a few unread texts from the group chat.

He sighed and put away his phone, staring at himself in the mirror. His eye bags were a bit softer today, but still prominent against his pale skin. Curse his British genes.

If only he could wear his GNotFound goggles to cover the eye bags.

George pulled out his phone again. *Still no alert.*

It has become a habit, checking his phone. In case he somehow missed the loud ding of the red alerts. For some reason he was expecting something today. It had been too long without an alert, all weekend with none. There had to be something today. It was building up, for sure.

After a few minutes in the bathroom, George finally left, choosing a long route back to the cafeteria, in the hopes of avoiding it as long as possible.

He almost ran into someone on his way through the hall, and quickly apologised, but realised he recognised her.

"Oh, Niki." He said.

"George." She smiled. There was a second of silence, before she gave him a hug, a tight one. George hugged back, but confused at the gesture. "What you did was amazing." She whispered. George laughed slightly, pulling away.

"I mean. It wasn't really intentional." He said.

"Still. Amazing." She said, and George noticed her eyes were slightly red.

"Are you ok?" He asked. She nodded.

"Yeah, I'm great. I'll see you later." She said.

"Ok. Wilbur and them are at the cafeteria." George said. She thanked him and waved goodbye before walking away.

George continued his peaceful walk, not really wanting to return to the cafeteria himself.

The halls were quiet as majority of students were eating lunch or catching up on homework in the libraries. His footsteps echoed slightly in the halls, but a new sound of voices nearing caught his attention.

He recognised one of the voices when they turned the corner towards him. George tried not to panic, instead turning around immediately and speed walking in the other direction.

"Hey, it's the f\*g!" The main voice he recognised shouted. And this was George's cue to start running. His shoes squeaked as he sprinted, one hand on his bag strap to stop it from falling off. But he could hear running behind him, about four pairs of shoes.

He abruptly skidded around a corner, not even sure which hallway he was running down, they all looked the same in this stupid school.

"Get back here!" One shouted. George's breathing was loud as his panic mixed with the running. He was fit, and fast, with good stamina, but the crushing feeling of dread was making it hard to maintain steady breathing.

As usual, he began to panic more about the thought of panicking. *I can't afford to have a panic attack now.*

He was too focused on trying to calm down, that someone had caught up, and stepped on the back of his shoes, making him stumble and trip. He fell on his hands and knees, and when he tried to get up, someone kicked him back down.

"What do you think you're doing?" One of the boys said. George lifted himself back up so he was leaning on his hands.

"Well, I was *trying* to get to cafeteria." He said, but the response he got was a kick in the side, making him twist and fall on his back, wincing.

"You shouldn't be allowed there, it's a public eating space." One of them said. George stared at the group of boys. He could not for the life of him remember their names, but they were all juniors. However, they were all taller and stronger, perks of being on the football team.

"What? Afraid I'll pass on the disease? Don't want to infect anyone else with *the gay*." George said in a dramatic voice.

Two of them grabbed him under the arms and started dragging him backwards. George tried twisting out of their grip but it was useless. He looked over his shoulder and saw they were approaching the stairs.

"Let me go!" George shouted, but the group just laughed at him in response. He was kicking and trying to dig his heels into the ground, but the floors were not accomodating.

He hated how weak he was without his sapphire.  
He was nothing without it.

"Why are you even still in this school?" One of the boys not dragging him said with a scoff, his arms crossed against his chest.

"Because I-" George was cut off by one of the guys pulling him to his feet by the scruff of his shirt. George tried pushing him off, but his efforts were futile.

"You don't belong here." He spat in George's face. And then proceeded to shove George harshly, making him tip backwards and fall down the stairs.

George's back hit the stairs hard, causing the air to leave his lungs as he gasped. The juniors cackled as he fell all the way down, crumpling at the end in pain.

"Let's drag him all the way out of the school." One of them laughed. George couldn't breathe, he was winded and bruised. He curled up into a ball at the bottom of staircase, not even bothering to stop the tears that had formed from pain.

"What's going on here?" A voice was heard at the top of the stairs. George paid no attention to it, instead focusing intently on forcing himself to breathe.

"George!" He heard the same voice yell, and footsteps rushing down the stairs. But George didn't feel the hand placed on his arm, his eyes were closed and his surroundings muffled. *Breathe. Breathe.*

"George it's ok, can you hear me?" The voice said near his ear. George slowly nodded. "Ok, remember what we did last time? Can you copy my breathing?"

George shook his head. He couldn't breathe. He felt firm hands sit him up, and warmth around his shoulders. His back hurt, and he winced.

"It's ok, just try to take slow breaths." They said. George dug his fingernails into his palms, bringing himself back to reality. His breathing was shallow at first, but after a minute he was breathing normally, copying the person beside him.

George opened his eyes, turning to meet the familiar green ones. George wordlessly stared into them, letting himself disappear in the yellow.

"Are you ok?" Clay asked, and George blinked, looking away. He nodded.

"Then what the fuck happened?" Clay moved his arm off of George's shoulder's, instead moving so he was in front of George. George winced as the pain hit him at the same time the warmth disappeared.

"I-I fell down the stairs."

"Obviously. Now who pushed you? Was it those kids?"

"What kids?" George asked innocently. Clay raised an eyebrow.

"Ok, I know you're a good liar, and you must know that too. But there's no way you just fell down the stairs yourself. Those juniors pushed you, and I know for sure someone hurt you on Friday." Clay said, staring intently at George.

"Can you help me up?" George asked quietly, shifting so he could get up. Clay sighed but stood up, holding out a hand and helping George stand up. The brunette was wincing as he stretched his back, and a shooting pain met his ankle. "Thanks." George said, letting go of Clay's warm hand and instead moving it to his own back, as if to soothe the sharp pain, and casually lifted his left ankle to avoid it touching the ground.

Clay took a step closer, examining George's face. George instinctively began to lean backwards, feeling flustered.

"You scraped the side of your face." Clay said.

"Oh. Um, I-I yeah, I um... I suppose I did. Um, I'm just gonna- you can.... I'm just...." George trailed off, trying to formulate complete sentences in his head first. Clay shook his head.

"Let's go to the nurse. You just fell down a flight of stairs, you probably hit your head and have a concussion, plus you're bleeding." Clay said. George shook his head.

"No way. They'll make me go home. I can't miss more class. I'll be in trouble."

"You're hurt."

"I'm not hurt. I'm fine." George said, taking a step away from Clay, but he winced when he put his weight on his left ankle again. Clay took a step forward as well, in concern.

"What was that?"

"N-nothing."

"Your foot."

"It's f-fine. I just twisted it maybe." George said, and took another step but his ankle gave out beneath him.

Clay had already jumped forward, grabbing George under the arms and stopping him from falling again. Before George could even react, Clay had moved George's arm around his shoulders and put his own around the smaller boy's waist to hold him up.

"We are going to the nurse." Clay said in a definitive voice, steering himself and George in the right direction and moving them forward. George was forced to hop beside him, but couldn't even speak, focusing too much on the hand gently placed on his waist.

"I'm sure they'll understand you missing class if you're injured." Clay added. George didn't respond, his mind was all over the place.

They walked in silence, well, George was hopping. Clay was trying to talk, but George wasn't responding much.

"Did you hit your head?" Clay asked. George shrugged, and Clay looked at him concerned. "Are you feeling dizzy?"

"No."

"Headache?"

"A little...."

"Tired or sleepy?"

"Always." George muttered. Clay looked down at the boy by his side. Maybe this was his chance to get him to open up to Clay instead of Dream.

"So. Remember when I was trying to get you tell me who that girl was that you like?" Clay asked. George nodded. "Well. I'm guessing it wasn't actually a girl..."

"Um. Yeah. It's a boy." George mumbled. Clay wasn't sure how to approach his next question.

"So. Um. Does the fact that I know you're gay change the possibility of you telling me?" Clay said with a smile. George didn't smile though. He was freaking out, he knew Clay was going to ask eventually.

"Um. No, I don't want to say."

"Do I know them?"

"Maybe. But I'm trying to move on from them because I know we will never be...." George trailed off. *More than friends.*

"That's ok. But also I would never judge you for who it is, or expose you."

"I know."

"Ok." Clay said, realising this was where the conversation would end. George wasn't going to share, and that's ok. I wonder if he would tell Dream.

Clay mentally punched himself, angry that he would even consider abusing his anonymity as Dream to get information out of George he would never get otherwise. He's glad George felt comfortable sharing with *someone*, but why Dream? Why not Clay?

It bothered him more than it should.

"So. Um. Why did you come find me?" George asked.

"You were gone for a while."

"But that doesn't mean anything was wrong."

"Yeah, but... I was worried."

"Why?"

"Well... I don't know. You've been through a lot."

"No I haven't." George said adamantly.

"Well, I have no experience, but I feel like being outed would be quite stressful." Clay said. George shook his head.



"It's not an issue, it was going to happen anyways. It's who I am, I don't have to hide anymore." George said.

"That's true... but it still isn't quite fair..."

"Well, it doesn't bother me." George said quickly.

"Really? I feel like if it was me-"

"Well it's not you, Clay. It's me. And I'm fine. You don't have to worry about me." George said. Clay nodded, closing his mouth.

"I'm sorry." Clay said, and George closed his eyes, as if in pain.

"Wait, no I'm sorry. That was harsh. Thank you. For checking on me. I really appreciate it." George said with a grimace.

"Of course, George."

"George? Oh my God what happened?" A voice came out of nowhere, jogging over to the pair. It was a blonde boy Clay had never met before. He was slightly shorter than himself, with curlier hair.

"I fell down the stairs." George said to the boy, who looked extremely concerned.

"Are you taking him to the nurse?" The boy asked Clay, who nodded. "I'm Xavier, by the way. Sorry I didn't introduce myself." He said, holding out a hand. Clay used his arm that wasn't around George to shake it, giving a warm smile to the boy.

"Clay."

"Nice to finally meet you, Clay. I've seen your father on Tv and stuff." Xavier said, and Clay nodded in response. Xavier seems nice.

"Have you hurt your ankle?" Xavier said, pointing at George's raised foot. George shrugged the same time Clay nodded.

"I think he's sprained it." Clay said.

"I'm literally fine." George interrupted.

"I'll help you to the nurse's office too. We have comp science next together anyways." Xavier nodded, moving to George's other side.

"Guys, I'm fine." George said, but didn't fight as Xavier also put an arm around George.

"He's not. I reckon he has a concussion." Clay added as George scoffed. *His stubbornness reminds me of G.*

The trio finally arrived at the Nurse, who sighed at the sight of George.

"Sit him down on the bed." She said, gesturing to the other room. When they did, the nurse put on gloves and grabbed her first aid box, pulling out some disinfectant and dressing.

"What's your name and what happened?" She sighed, pouring the rubbing alcohol on a cloth.

"George Davidson. And I fell down the stairs." George said.

"He hurt his ankle too." Clay added. Him and Xavier were standing in the small room, awkwardly to the side.

"I see." She said, placing down the cloth and looking at George. "Can you take your shoe off?" She asked. George bent down and untied his laces, slowly slipping off the shoe, but winced when it moved.

The nurse bent down and pressed into his ankle. "Does that hurt?" She did more poking and slight movements to see how bad the injury was. George sucked in sharp breaths when it moved, but not to touch.

"Can you put weight on it?" She asked, and he slowly stood up, tenderly putting his foot on the ground. He quickly lifted it again when it reached a point, and he sat back down.

"Ok. I don't think it's broken, or you wouldn't be able to even put it on the ground, plus it would hurt if I touch it. It could be sprained, so I'm going to ice it and call your parents to take you to the doctor." She said. George closed his eyes in frustration. *Of fucking course.*

"No need, I'll call my mum myself." George said with a sigh, pulling his phone out of his pocket.

"Ok, that's fine. Let me know when she'll come pick you up. Here, lift your foot onto the bed and hold this to it until she comes." She said, holding out an ice pack. George nodded, rotating so his legs were on the bed, and took the ice pack. He held it against his foot with one hand, and texted with his other.

The bell rang to signal the end of lunch, and the nurse turned to the two boys who were still awkwardly standing in the room.

"If one of you would like to stay to help Mr Davidson to his car when his mother arrives, that would be nice." She said. Xavier and Clay looked at each other.

"I don't mind-" Clay said.

"I'll do it, it's ok. I have class with George now anyways and we won't miss much." Xavier said. Clay looked at George, who looked up.

"I can get to the car myself." He said, but both boys and the nurse shook their heads.

"Ok, thanks for helping Xavier. I'll text you later George." Clay said, giving George a wave.

"Thank you Clay. For... you know." George said softly. Clay smiled and left, leaving George with the nurse and Xavier. The nurse grabbed her cloth with disinfectant again and started cleaning George's scrape on his cheek. It wasn't too bad, just the top layer of skin between his cheekbone and eye bleeding slightly.

George winced as she cleaned the wound, but didn't really care too much. He's been in worse pain before.

"She'll be here in five minutes." George said, checking his phone. The nurse nodded.

"Ok. Well do you both want to go meet her now? You can ice your injury at home or the doctors." She said, George nodded, and Xavier came over to help him up.

"Thank you." George said to the nurse, who watched as they left.

Xavier grinned to George when they left the office. "Lucky you, getting to miss comp science." He said. George shook his head.

"No way am I missing it." He said. Xavier furrowed his eyebrows in confusion.

"But you're going home."

"No I'm not. Let's go to class." George said, trying his best to pull Xavier with him. The blonde stopped.

"George, you sprained your ankle. The doctors need to check it."

"I'm seeing the doctor on Wednesday anyways, if it doesn't get better, I'll get it checked then. I can't miss class, I'm already so behind."

"Not in comp science. You're way ahead."

"I still have to do the assignment." George said, trying to pull the blonde again.

"George-"

"Do you know much about first aid?" George asked.

"Not really, but she said it should get checked-"

"That's just a precaution in case it is broken. But it's not, because it's not swelling or painful to touch. For sprained ankles you just shouldn't walk on it for too long."

"Don't you need to ice it?"

"Well, you can for the pain. But it won't fix the ankle. I'll rest tonight and it'll be fine tomorrow." George said. Xavier hummed in thought. "Xavier, please. Please let me go to class. I have to. I promise I'll tell my parents when I get home." George said. Xavier sighed, conflicted.

"Ok. Fine. But you will definitely tell your parents?"

"Yes." George said, and Xavier narrowed his eyes.

"Are you lying."

"If you don't trust me, then come over to my house and tell my mom yourself." George said. Xavier laughed.

"I thought you were grounded."

"Well, I asked, and mom said I could do a study group." George said. Xavier grinned at George, his face lighting up.

"Really? Do you think we could today?"

"Yeah, I'll text her and let her know."

"Then I can tell her about your ankle, make sure it gets checked." Xavier said, beginning to walk with George to class, who hopped along.

"Fine." George agreed. "But don't scare her, just say the nurse said to ice it." George said.

"Ok, deal."

"Deal." George looked into Xavier's eyes, making the blonde smile down at him.

It was concerning how easily the lies slipped through George's teeth.

## Chapter End Notes

Hi

# We are superheroes, not celebrities

## Chapter Summary

George remembers that him and Dream have a TV interview as their superhero selves. Let's just hope it doesn't get too personal.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Are you ok?" Xavier asked, and George looked up from his laptop. They were both sitting on the floor of his room, George had his foot resting against a pillow so it was slightly raised.

"Yeah, my ankle's fine." George said, gesturing to the ice pack resting against it that his mother got him. He managed to convince her it didn't hurt too bad.

"No, not your ankle. You just seem really quiet." Xavier said.

"Oh. I'm sorry. I guess I'm a bit tired." George said, his default explanation.

Actually, there was something nagging at the back of his head, and it has been all day. There was something he needed to do, but he couldn't remember what, and it was killing him.

Also he was thinking about everything, especially the target now on his back and the dread that follows the thought of him having to go back to school.

"Is that it? Just tired?" Xavier asked and George nodded. Xavier closed his laptop, giving George a look. "You can tell me if there is something wrong."

"I don't have anything to tell."

"Is it because you were outed?"

"Why the hell does everyone keep thinking that's the problem?" George said. *It's one of many things.*

"Well if I was outed without my control I would be extremely stressed out, especially in this school environment that it obviously not very welcoming."

"Well, I'm fine."

"Ok. I believe you." Xavier said, but didn't open his laptop again. George watched him, waiting for him to say something else.

"How did your family take it?" Xavier asked, leaning backwards against the wall. George relaxed slightly since the interrogation changed.

"I told them the night before, and they took it well."

"That's great, George. My family took my coming out well too." Xavier said. George sat up slightly, looking at Xavier in slight shock.

"Wait..."

"I'm gay too." Xavier smiled. George smiled back.

"Wow. That's awesome. Congrats, Xavier." George said, suddenly feeling a little bit less alone.

"Thanks. I've been out to them for about a year now though. I just haven't been bothered to share with anyone else, apart from my close friends." Xavier shrugged.

"A year? Wow." George said, his admiration showing. Xavier chuckled.

"I have to admit, it was a bit of a relief to hear that you were also part of the community. It's nice knowing you aren't alone, you know?" Xavier said, and George immediately nodded.

"Yeah, I get that." George said with a laugh. Xavier smiled at him.

"Thanks for this by the way. It's actually been really helpful." He said. They had been working on their computer science assignment for two hours, George helping Xavier when he needed.

"Yeah, it's been good for me too, practising identifying errors and stuff." George said.

"I owe you icecream." Xavier said with a smile. George laughed.

"Ok, fine."

"Maybe not today since your ankle, plus I think that show with Dream and GNotFound is on soon, and I'm guessing you want to watch it too. But later this week?" He asked. George thought about it.

"I think my doctors appointment is Wednesday, so maybe-"

George stopped. *The show. The fucking show.* It's been organised for weeks, he's known for ages. And he still managed to forget.

"When does the show start?" George asked quickly. Xavier checked the time on his phone.

"I think it starts at in fifteen minutes, at 5:30." He said. George felt his heart stop.

He can't go. If he transforms, his ankle won't be healed since the injury didn't occur while he was a superhero. For one thing, walking on it hurts badly, and secondly, if someone notices GNotFound has an injury, then they could figure out George Davidson has the same injury.

But he can't leave Dream alone. It's not fair for him to deal with the interview alone. Plus, he needed to keep his partner in check.

"Anyways. So icecream later this week?" Xavier asked with a laugh.

"Um. Yeah sure. Hey, I'm really sorry but my head is kind of really hurting, I think I might be a tiny bit concussed. I don't think I can do anymore coding." George said with a chuckle. Xavier smiled and nodded.

"That's perfectly ok. I'll help you to your bed and I'll get going. I live like a ten minute walk from here anyway." He said, packing his bag and standing up.

"I can get up myself, I'm ok." George said, pushing his laptop off his lap and moving his ankle off the pillow.

But before he could stand up himself, Xavier had bent down next to him, his face close to George's

"You shouldn't put pressure on your ankle. I can lift you to your bed if you're ok with that." Xavier said, a small smile on his face. George looked into his eyes. Yellow. Not as bright as Clay's, but still warm. Like honey.

"Can you even lift me?" George asked. Xavier laughed softly, running a hand through his wavy hair.

"George, you're so small. Yes, I can carry you." He said. Before George could even react, Xavier had already placed one arm under his knees, and the other around his lower back, and lifted George up.

George immediately put his arms around the taller boy's neck, not really wanting to fall. Xavier looked down at George, giving him a smile before carefully placing him on the bed.

"Thanks." George said, slightly embarrassed at having to be carried.

"No problem. I'll see you tomorrow, and later this week for icecream." Xavier said, swinging his bag over his shoulder and giving George a wave.

"Bye Xavier." George said, waving back as the boy left his room.

George stared at where Xavier was standing, rethinking the entire conversation.

Why did he feel a few butterflies when he was close to Xavier? Did he like Xavier or was he just touch-starved? The boy was nice, caring, funny. And he was gay. *Do I like him or do I like the fact that he likes boys and gives me attention.*

There was a knock at the door that scared George slightly, but his mother was there with a small smile.

"How was that?" She asked.

"It was good, I helped him with the assignment." George said.

"He's quite nice, isn't he." She said, a raised eyebrow. George nodded.

"Yeah. He's going to repay me by buying me icecream later this week. Is that ok? I know I'm grounded." He asked. His mother raised an eyebrow.

"Is that a date?" She asked. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"I-I don't think so. No, it's just a thank you." George said. His mother shook her head with a smile.

"I think he likes you."

"What? Why?"

"Dunno. He just seems like he really cares. He was making sure I knew you were hurt, because you wouldn't." She said, giving him a pointed look at the end.

"I like Clay." George said.

"And that's fine. But that doesn't mean you can't explore your options. Do you think anything could have happened between you and Clay?" She asked. George slowly shook his head.

"No." He sighed. "He's straight, and likes someone else." He said. Lorna gave him a sad smile.

"Could anything happen between you and Xavier?" She asked.

"Um. I mean, he's..." George said. Lorna knew what he was going to say.

"That's a start. Do you like him?"

"Well, yeah. I mean, he's nice and sweet."

"Attractive?"

"Yes. But I don't think I can get over Clay that quick. I don't want to lead Xavier on." George said. His mother sighed with a smile.

"You're not the type of person to lead someone on. You're young, and you're learning. I know you'll make the right choice." Lorna said.

George suddenly remembered the show.

"Thanks mom. I'm going to sleep now, I'm exhausted. Well, may as well start trying to sleep." George said.

"Ok sweetie. Remember if you still can't get to sleep, try some of those strategies Dr Puffy suggested."

"Ok Mom. Goodnight."

"Love you."

"Love you too."

Once she left, George sat himself up, and swung his legs over the side of his bed, tenderly placing his feet on the ground. He took a deep breath and stood up, majority of his weight being placed on his good ankle, but he still winced.

"Ok. It's ok." He said, turning to put the pillow under his blanket like usual to make it look like he was sleeping.

He usually sneaks out first and then transforming, to make sure no one sees GNotFound leave this house. Sometimes he doesn't have time, but he knows Xavier just left and can't risk it.

He limped to the window, and carefully and awkwardly climbed out, finding the pipe on the side of the house to slide down, taking it slow for his ankle.

It was already getting dark at 5pm, the streetlights had come on. George kept to the shadows as he limped down the street, not wanting to be seen. Tears were in his eyes due to the pain in his ankle, but he pushed on.

Eventually, he reached a small park, and hid behind some trees in the dark, grabbing his pendent. "Mask on."

When he transformed, he put his bad foot on the ground again, and still sucked in a sharp breathe when he put his body weight on it.

But it didn't hurt as bad as normal. He could probably walk on it with less of a limp.



He started walking again, and let out a sigh of relief at the slightly less pain. It was still there, but not as tear-jerking.

He wasn't sure if he was imagining it, but he thought his ankle was getting easier to put up with the more he walked. He tried jogging, and actually found it to be easier, since his foot had less contact with the ground.

He jogged through the street, avoiding the rooftops so he won't have to climb up and down. He was making his way towards the Tv station, where the interview was going to be aired live. He was definitely slightly late, and was just praying that Dream was already there.

When he finally made it, some producers and other crew immediately brought him to the room. There was a lot of lights set up, and a small stage with a couch and a chair across from it. George sighed in relief when he saw Dream already sitting on the couch, making small talk with a lady across from him.

"So, Dream. Any word on your partner? Do you think he'll be showing up the the show soon?" The woman with bright red hair asked. George noticed there was a light on the camera facing them. They were live.

"I'm sure he will be here. But I guess you can say G is NotFound." Dream said with a chuckle, crossing a leg over the other, his ankle on top of his knee. George rolled his eyes and then was pulled forward by someone in the crew, practically shoved onto the stage. He winced when he stumbled on his ankle, but quickly covered it up with a laugh.

"Hi! I'm so sorry I'm late." George said, as the woman and Dream turned to him. The lights were blinding, and everyone staring at them was making him feel extremely overwhelmed already. But Dream grinned, and George saw his partner's shoulder visibly relax.

"No problem. Please, take a seat. I'm Mandy." The woman said, holding out her hand. George smiled and shook it.

"GNotFound. I'm hoping I didn't leave Dream alone for too long. He has a habit of making bad impressions." George said, letting go and leaning back in the couch slightly.

"Excuse me." Dream scoffed, but Mandy just laughed.

"He was great, just telling us a bit about the recent heist with the criminals stealing from the mayor." She said. George glanced at Dream.

"What did he tell you?" George asked nervously. Dream rolled his eyes.

"Nothing confidential. Just about what we did to track them." Dream said.

"Ok, good." George sighed, looking back at Mandy.

"Well, it's amazing to finally have you guys on the show. It's been almost an entire year and we've never had a chance to have a sit-down chat." She said. George and Dream nodded. "You both save our lives day to day, but we feel like we barely even get to hear you talk." She said.

"Most of the time we are preoccupied with fighting or about to change back." George explained, and Mandy smiled.

"Of course. It must be difficult, living a double life. Does anyone in your personal life know about your role?" She asked. Both George and Dream shook their heads.

"No, we can't tell anyone. It could put their safety and ours at risk if it was to get out." George said.

"And G will shoot me if he found out I told anyone." Dream added, receiving a punch from George. Mandy laughed.

"Do the two of you know each other?" She asked.

"Well, not in the way you're thinking. We don't know our civilian identities, but we know each other, considering we've been partners for a year." George said.

"So how did it all start? What's your origin stories? How did you get your powers?" She asked with her signature smile. George glanced at Dream.

"Well, there are some things we can't say. But we will try our best." George said, scared Dream might say something wrong.

"That's ok. We understand there is some information you can't share." Mandy said.

"Well, we received our jewels a year ago, and both of us took on the responsibility of protecting the city. And here we are." George said.

"How did you feel about taking on this role? Did you get much of a choice? How did you get your jewels?" She asked.

"I love this job. It's perfect for me, it's a good escape from my personal life, and I got to meet this amazing guy." Dream said, putting an arm around George, who tried to shove him off.

"We didn't *really* get much choice, but I guess there is always a choice. We choose everyday to keep fighting and protect this city." George said. Both heroes managing to avoid who gave them the jewels quite successfully.

"Is it hard managing your two lives?" Mandy asked. George immediately nodded, and so did Dream, who finally removed his arm.

"Yes, it's extremely difficult. Every time there is an alert, we basically have to stop what we are doing." George said.

"It's sometimes a bit annoying when it interrupts something fun or important I was doing. But we do everything we can to come help." Dream agreed.

"Everyone knows how much the two of you are called, since we all get the alerts as well. It seems like you spend a lot of time as your hero selves. What would you say is the most affected part of your civilian life?" She asked.

"For me, I'd say sleep. And all that self-care stuff. Being on call 24-7 really messes with my routine." George said with a dry laugh.

"I think my social life. It's difficult to hang out with friends when you have to flake all the time." Dream decided.

"It seems like it can be quite hard sometimes, keeping balance between all the important parts of your life. How do you manage it?" Mandy asked.

"I don't." George and Dream both said at the same time, and then both laughed.

"I mean, it's only been a year. I know *I'm* still getting used to it." George said, looking at Dream

who nodded.

"Yeah. Learning what is most important to keep in balance is difficult. And when to focus on other important things." Dream said.

"And it's already hard enough keeping balance, let alone with a superhero job in the mix." Mandy laughed. "Especially for such young guys. How old are the two of you?" She asked. Dream looked at G, scared of saying the wrong response.

"We can't reveal our ages, I'm sorry." George said.

"Of course, I'm sorry. I just know the two of you have quite a big fanbase, most of them dying to know your ages. I think a lot of them are fangirls." Mandy said with a laugh.

"Fans?" George asked. Mandy nodded.

"Yes. I know there are a lot of girls and even some boys who are obsessed over the two of you. In fact, apparently there is some written fanfiction about you." She said.

George was mortified, and his cheeks went pink. Dream let out a wheeze beside him at the news.

"Fanfiction?" George repeated, and Mandy nodded.

"Ok... well the one thing I'm going to say now, is that we are in fact both minors. Fanfiction is ok, but please don't sexualise us." George said calmly, deciding that maybe that was the only piece of information they could share.

"You are *both* minors?" Mandy said, looking at them both. George nodded, but Dream was staring at George in shock that he revealed that.

"It's not our specific ages, so I think it's enough information." George added, and Mandy nodded with a large smile.

"You said you are both minors. That means you knew already that Dream was too. How did you find out?" She asked.

"Oh. Yeah, we did know that much about each other." George said, glancing at Dream.

"I know more than that. I know G like the back of my hand." Dream said with a smirk, leaning backwards with his hands behind his head. George elbowed him.

"Shut up, Dream. He doesn't know anything else." George said apologetically to Mandy.

"I know that you love meee." Dream said in a teasing voice, and George groaned.

"Not now, Dream." George muttered, but Dream just wheezed at his seriousness. Mandy smiled at the two of them.

"Even if you don't know much about each other, it seems like you are pretty close." She said.

"Yeah, I mean. I've had to put up with this idiot for a year now." George said, pushing Dream's face away from himself. The green man was grinning beside him.

"We are just the bestest of friends, aren't we." Dream grinned and George groaned.

"So you mentioned earlier Dream about your social life, and how hard it is to maintain. What's

dating like? Hard to find time?" She asked.

George's jaw dropped slightly in shock. Dream was about to answer but George stopped him.

"That's a rather personal question. We would rather just stick to the topic of our jobs and how we help the city." George said. Mandy nodded.

"Of course, I'm sorry. I just imagine it must be difficult keeping a relationship with such a big secret to keep." She quickly said.

"It's like that with every relationship in our lives. Friends, family. So yeah, I guess I don't really think much about dating." Dream said carefully. George stared at the woman.

"So no one special in your life?" She asked Dream. George stopped him again.

"This is getting a bit personal. We aren't here to talk about our civilian selves. We want to let the city know what we do and how we help." He said.

"Of course. I'm just asking what a lot of our audience wants to know. Even some of your fans are curious if the two of you young mysterious guys are single." She said with a small smirk. George heard Dream chuckle nervously beside him.

"I am single, but I do have my eyes on someone." Dream said. George snapped his head towards his partner .

"Dream." He said through clenched teeth. Dream glanced at him, but looked back at Mandy who was grinning.

"Whoever the lucky person would be ecstatic to know that *the* Dream has a crush on them." She said. Dream nervously scratched the back of his neck as he felt the anger from his partner.

"Our dating lives are none of the public's concern. It's not apart of our job, which is what we were here to discuss." George said to Mandy, his fists clenching.

"Of course, of course. I only brought it up because there has been a few recent theories that the two of you are together." She said.

George's jaw dropped, but a grin rose on Dream's face.

"What?!" George practically yelled.

"Yeah, some fans are shipping *DreamNotFound*." She said. Dream was grinning ear to ear, turning to look at George with glee.

"I told you we are meant to be together." He joked.

"It's not funny, Dream." George said, standing up. Dream's smile fell, and Mandy looked worried.

"We explicitly said that this interview was not to go into anything personal. Our dating lives and relationships shouldn't be anyone's concern. I don't care what people think or write or assume. They can do whatever they want. But don't use *this* interview as a chance to get a headline for gossip on us. Our job is to protect the city, and we make sacrifices everyday to do that. Don't make this about our civilian lives." George said.

"G-"

"No, Dream. This is ridiculous. We are superheroes." George said, turning back to Mandy. "Not

celebrities." He said, and then promptly walked off the stage, passed the crew and cameras. Luckily no one stopped him.

George stormed out of the building, fists and teeth clenched.

"G! What the hell was that!" Dream said, jogging in front of George. George just turned and started walking in a new direction down the street. Dream caught up again.

"It wasn't that big of a deal. Why did you make it so dramatic." Dream said. George made a sound of frustration that was almost a growl.

His ankle was still sore, and felt it limping just ever so slightly. He see Dream glance down.

"Are you hurt?"

"Just my knee. Not a big deal." George lied through gritted teeth, turning down another street and contemplating jogging away, but Dream got in front and stopped him.

"What happened in there?"

"They got too personal." George said, crossing his arms over his legs.

"It was a Tv show interview! What did you expect. And *you* were the one who confirmed we were minors."

"I expected them to respect our boundaries. Not pull all this crap out about fanfiction and shipping." George said with animated hand gestures. Dream frowned.

"Is it that shocking for people to think we could be together?" Dream asked.

"That's not the point, Dream."

"No, but I'm asking. Is it *that* horrible of a concept to make you storm out of the interview?"

"I didn't get mad because of that. I got mad because she was asking so many personal questions. And that was the last straw. We are partners, and it's one thing to ship us together, but a completely different thing to directly ask us during an interview which we explicitly said we don't want to share our personal lives." George explained. Dream was still frowning slightly.

"So it wasn't the idea of us dating that made you upset?"

"It was all of it. It's no one's business. It's the principle I'm upset about. We aren't dating, and aren't going to, but the fact that she brought it up, along with other things. I thought the interview would be about our powers or what our plans are or how we are going to protect the city, why we do what we do. But no. She wanted to know our ages and relationship status. The headline tomorrow is going to be: *'Dream is single everyone!'*." George mocked.

"I don't care if they know my relationship status. It's not like they could figure out who I am. They can ask us personal questions so long as it's not my identity. It's not that big of a deal, I don't get why you're so upset about it." Dream said, ignoring the hurt he felt at G saying they would never date.

"Our job is to protect the city. We don't do this for the fame, or the news stories, or the fans. It's to protect everyone. We aren't celebrities, we shouldn't be headlines of the page because of our ages or favourite colour or relationship status. We should be for our achievements. Our personal details

take away from our goal and what we want people to know. We want them to know we will always be here to protect them, not that we are lonely teenagers with shitty social lives." George said.

"But with our powers comes the fame, and the interviews, and the headlines." Dream said. George shook his head.

"We shouldn't be treated differently just because we are mysterious. We live to protect the city, I'm not being stripped down to some cheap star who talks about their life like it's everyone's business." George said.

The duo looked at each other for another minute, both not knowing what else to say.

"I'll see you later Dream." George said, moving around the green man, but Dream stopped him again.

"Wait. It's dumb, but is it really that ridiculous of a concept of us dating? Like do I repulse you that much?" Dream asked.

"What? Dream, we don't even know each other's names. We couldn't date even if we *actually* liked each other like that." George said.

Ouch.

"Right. I know. Ridiculous. Anyways, until next time, Goggles." Dream said, poking him on the glasses. George scoffed, but Dream ran off before George could scold him.

## Chapter End Notes

Writing fanfiction about DreamNotFound?  
Pfft who would do that

# How did we both end up in the ER

## Chapter Summary

George winds up at the hospital with a screwed up ankle. He wasn't expecting to see Clay there too.

## Chapter Notes

TW// abuse

CW// pills (medication)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Yo yo yo." Nick answered the phone.

"I'm not coming in today, Mom moved the appointment because of my ankle." George sighed. He was in the waiting room, his mother beside him.

"Your ankle?"

"Oh. Yesterday I fell down the stairs at school and hurt my ankle."

"You fell down the stairs? George how." Nick said.

"Obviously not intentionally. Anyways, can you take notes for me." He said.

"Yes I will get Darryl to take notes for you." Nick said, and George rolled his eyes.

"Whatever see you tomorrow."

"Yeah, wait did you see the interview with GNotFound and Dream last night?" Nick asked. George winced at the memory.

"No."

"Oh my God, I can't wait to rant to you."

"Bye Nick." George rolled his eyes.

"Bye Gogy."

George hung up the phone and looked at his mom.

"It's really not that bad, we didn't need to come to the hospital." He said for the fiftieth time.

"You couldn't leave your room this morning because it hurt so bad. You might need an x-ray, so we came to the hospital." Lorna said. George sighed.

"I thought it would just be an appointment at like a clinic."

"That was until you hurt your ankle. And somehow got worse overnight."

"Missing more school. Great." He rolled his eyes, and his mother shook her head.

"This is important." She said, and received a shrug from her son.

After a while, a Doctor came out and called his name. He tried to get up, but his foot hurt to touch the ground. He really shouldn't have ran on it yesterday.

A nurse had to bring a wheelchair over so he could be moved to the other room without hurting his ankle more. But this just made George feel more embarrassed. He was helped to the bed once they reached the room.

"Hi, I'm Dr McMillan." The Doctor said, shaking hands with Lorna and then George.

"I'm George, and my ankle is fine."

"It's not, we think he sprained it yesterday." His mother interrupted. The Doctor turned to George.

"So how did that happen?"

"I tripped down the stairs." He said. The doctor nodded.

"Can I have a look?" He asked. George nodded and the Doctor carefully took off his sock, using gloves. "Let me know when it hurts, ok George?" He said. George nodded and he started gently touching and moving the foot, George letting him know when it hurt.

"Ok, it's not broken, he has enough movement. The ankle is slightly swollen but not too bad. Definitely a sprain, I don't think we need an x-ray. But an ankle splint will help keep his ankle from too much movement." He said, taking off his gloves and looking to Lorna who nodded.

"A splint? What kind? Will it be big? Can I walk on it?" George had many questions.

"There are a few types. You are not to walk on your ankle today, but you can tomorrow. The splint can be thin, more of a brace with velcro if you need. And you might have to wear it for a few weeks, until your ankle repairs itself." He said.

"Can it fit under socks?" George needed to know. If he transforms, would his suit cover it or remove it entirely?

"The one I recommend, yes."

"There was another issue we were going to see a GP about tomorrow but while we are here we may as well address." Lorna said. The Doctor nodded, allowing her to continue.

"George has been having some sleep problems. I didn't know how bad it was until he confided in a school councillor, but apparently he barely sleeps. Is it normal for a teenager?" Lorna asked, and George sighed, getting ready to be interrogated. Dr McMillan turned to George.

"How much sleep a night do you get on average?" He asked.

"Depends on the night. Maybe 1 or 2. Max, 4. A lot of the time, none." George said.

"How long has that been going on?"



"A few months."

"Do you have trouble getting to sleep, or staying asleep? Nightmares? Sleepwalking?"

"I can never get to sleep, it takes hours if I try. I wake up a lot, and yes I have nightmares. I don't think I sleepwalk though."

"How about during the day? Are you tired? Nap at all? Difficulty concentrating? Loss of appetite? Headaches?"

"All of the above, but my naps are like a few minutes during school." George said. Dr McMillan nodding, writing down in his clipboard.

"Definitely sounds like chronic insomnia. It's been happening for a while and is affecting your every day. I'll refer you to a sleep specialist here in the hospital. They can run a blood test to see if there's any causes and discuss medication with you. Maybe even able to get you some sleep here."

"Sounds great, thank you Doctor." Lorna said.

"Wait what does sleep here mean?" George asked.

"Give you some medication by injection to get you to have an interrupted rest here, probably for at least eight hours if you need it." He said. George's eyes widened, looking at his Mom.

"That would be good, I think. Your body needs it George." She said, the doctor also nodding.

"Lack of sleep can lead to even more health issues, including weakened immune system, and even mental health issues."

"I'm fine, I don't need that. I just need some techniques to help me fall asleep and I'm fine." George said.

"It's not just the techniques, your body may need medication, which can block a hormone that's keeping you awake for example. Depends on the issue." Dr McMillan said. George shook his head.

"I don't want to sleep." George said, as the Doctor continued writing on his clipboard.

"Honey, you need it." Lorna said. The doctor handed her a form.

"What's that?" George said, slightly distressed.

"It's just the referral to the sleep specialist and the details for the splint." Lorna said calmly.

"I don't want to go to the sleep specialist, they'll make me sleep." George said, his voice slightly shaky.

"You need it."

"No, I can't. I can't miss the day. What if I miss something important?"

"There's nothing important. It would just be a few hours, and besides, you may not even need to sleep here. They could just prescribe medication for tonight." Lorna said.

"I'm not sleeping here. I'm not taking any fucking medication." George said. Lorna walked over.

"George, calm down. It's ok. No one is making you do anything." She said. George shook his head,

beginning to freak out.

They'll make him sleep, and there will be an alert, and he'll miss it. It'll be his fault if something goes wrong. What if Dream can't handle it alone? He has to stay alert, he had to stay on-call.

They can't force him to sleep. He won't be able to wake up. Every night he'll be passed out. He'll sleep through an alert.

"George, breathe." Lorna said, grabbing his hand. George pulled away, and this got the Doctor's attention.

"George, it's ok. No one is making you do anything. We just want to help." He said, coming closer.

But George felt like the walls were closing in on him. His fear of not being able to breathe crushing him even more. He needed to get out. He needed to get out of this place where they'll force him to sleep.

George jumped off the bed, almost falling to the ground when his ankle landed. But the pain was bearable, fuelled with the adrenaline from his fight-or-flight response kicking in.

He half-hopped out of the room, shoving past a nurse, just *needing to get out*. Pain was shooting up his leg, but he ignored it. He needed to get away. He couldn't breathe in there.

"George!" His mom called, but he continued to run down the hall.

He reached the waiting room of ER, and felt even more claustrophobic, with the large number of people in the room.

He heard his name being called from a bit behind, so he tried finding the exit but it was too crowded and it felt like he was suffocating.

"George?" A calm, familiar voice echoed through the loud buzzing of everything. "George." The voice said his name again, but George ignored it, still limping through the room, trying to find the exit. *Why can't I leave? Why can't I breathe?*

Someone grabbed his arms, and his response was to yell, trying to pull away.

"No! No I don't want to sleep. I don't want to sleep!" He yelled.

"You don't have to sleep. It's ok. George, breathe with me." He heard Clay's voice. He opened his eyes which he didn't realise had squeezed tightly shut.

Clay had a gauze pressed to his forehead that was soaked in blood. George's eyes widened in shock.

"What's happening, George?" Clay asked, his eyes full of confusion and concern. But at that same moment, he heard his Mom call his name, and George began to panic again, trying to pull away from Clay.

Clay held George's elbow, stopping the panicked boy from going anywhere. George had tears in his eyes, as he frantically tried to find a way out.

"What's going on?" Clay asked, seeing George's mom, a doctor and some nurses arrive in the waiting room.

"They are going to inject me with drugs. Make me sleep. I can't sleep. I don't want to sleep. Please don't make me sleep." George said, shaking his head. Clay looked at Lorna who ran over.

"George, it's ok. No one is going to do anything to you." She said, putting a hand on his shoulder. George grabbed Clay's arm tightly.

"Clay don't make me go." He said, looking up with desperate brown eyes.

"What-" Clay said, extremely concerned and confused.

A nurse grabbed George's arm and injected him with something, making him gasp and grip Clay's arm tighter. Clay looked at the needle with wide eyes.

"It's just to make him relax, he's having a panic attack. He'll be ok, just needs to calm down." She quickly explained to everyone. George looked at Clay, shaking his head.

"I'm going to die." He said, his eyes big and watery.

"You're not going to die, it's ok George. Take a deep breath with me." Clay said, taking a purposeful deep breath that George mimicked. A bed was wheeled over and the nurses tried to move George to the bed, but he was clinging to Clay like his life depended on it.

"Clay, can you lie him down. We don't want to freak him out more." One of the nurses said. Clay nodded, gently moving George himself to the bed and lying him down.

"That's it, Georgie." Clay said patiently, getting the boy to lie down on it. George didn't let go of his arm, but his breathing had calmed down a lot.

"I can't sleep. I can't miss anything." George mumbled.

"Nothing will happen." Clay said calmly, still unable to detach himself from George.

"What if there's something I need to do." George said, his voice drowsy.

"Then I'll take care of it. Ok?" Clay said softly with a small smile, still thoroughly concerned for his friend and whatever was happening. George had his eyes closed, but still holding onto Clay's sleeve.

"Promise?"

"I promise."

"Ok Dream." George mumbled, it barely louder than a whisper, and then finally let go of Clay. Clay's eyes widened slightly as he stepped back. The nurses began to wheel George away, the Doctor following.

Everyone in the waiting room had watched the entire situation unfold, some looking equally as concerned as Clay, and some looked pissed at the event.

Lorna quickly walked over to Clay.

"Clay, what happened to your head?" She asked, looking concerned at the massive gash on the side of his head.

"Oh. I just hit it on the dining table. Is George ok, Mrs Davidson? What happened?" He asked.

"Call me Lorna, remember. And we came in for his ankle, but asked about his insomnia. The doctor referred him to a sleep specialist and said what they can do to help him sleep. One of the options was to get him to have an uninterrupted sleep at the hospital, since his body needs it. But

he freaked out at that. I'm not sure why."

"But he's ok now?"

"Yes, he will be. I'm sorry about that, I've never seen him get that panicked. Thank you for helping though. Seems like he really trusts you." Lorna said. Clay gave an awkward smile, scratching the back of his neck.

"It's fine. I hope he's ok, though. Can you get him to call or text me later?" He asked. Lorna nodded.

"I will. Thanks again, Clay." She said with a warm smile, and then walked back down the hallway George had come from.

Clay let out a breath, just now noticing all the eyes on him. He cleared his throat and sat back down, next to Tracy who was also watching in confusion.

"Who was that boy?" She asked.

"My friend George from school." He responded quickly, not wanting to have to make anymore conversation with her.

"Clay Block." A voice called his name, and he stood up, with Tracy. A lot of people in the room looked at him again when his name was called.

He was taken to a room, his mind still thinking about the entire interaction with George.

*Ok Dream.* George said. He called him Dream. But he wasn't even transformed. Did George recognise his voice as Dream's while he was drowsy? George has spoken with Dream a few times on the roof. He must have just gotten confused when talking to Clay. But what if George has figured it out? What if he knows Dream is Clay. There's no way, it's not possible. He must have just gotten confused.

*Oh shit. What if he remembers that later?* What if George makes the connection between Dream and Clay. What if he figures out his identity, and that he was the one on the roof, listening to all of George's secrets.

George would hate him. Not to mention both their safety's would be at risk. And GNotFound would be furious with him.

"Hi, I'm Dr Rose." A brunette woman said, getting Clay to lay down on the bed, his back propped up.

"I'm Tracy, this is Clay." Tracy said, sitting down in a chair beside the bed.

"Alright. So it seems you have a head injury. How did this happen?" She asked, putting on gloves and walking closer to Clay, reaching up to the temporary bandage.

"He hit it on the corner of the dining table." Tracy said for him. Clay saw the doctor's name tag. *Dr Hannah Rose.*

"Ok, and how long ago did it happen?" She asked, peeling off the gauze to have a look at the cut.

"About twenty minutes ago." Tracy said. Dr Rose nodded, examining the cut.

"Will I need stitches?" Clay asked nervously. She hummed, still looking at the cut.

"Yes, I think so. It's not the worst head wound I've seen. It's already slowing bleeding which is good. It's not too deep, but I think stitches is the best option here. First I just need to check for a concussion, ok?" She asked, placing the gauze back over the wound and removing her gloves.

"Ok, did you black out at all when you hit your head?" She asked, grabbing a light.

"Yes, for a few seconds apparently." Tracy said. Hannah turned to her.

"Did you see him hit his head?" She asked.

"I did not."

"Then is it ok if I get Clay to answer?" She said with a fake smile. Tracy nodded and Hannah turned to Clay with a genuine smile.

"Yeah. My sister said it was for a few seconds." He said, and she nodded.

"Do you remember what you were doing just before you hit your head?" She asked.

Clay hesitated. Yes, he did. But he couldn't say that. "I was walking to the dinner table to grab my bag but I tripped over the carpet and hit my head." He said. She nodded again, and then held the light up to one of his eyes, then moving to the next.

"Do you have any headaches?"

"Um. Yeah, a bit."

"Dizzy?" She asked.

"A little." He said.

"Can you walk to the door and back please in a straight line." She said. Clay got up and did as he was told, lying back down on the bed.

"Do you feel sick or nauseous?" She asked, and he shook his head. "Ok. I don't think you have a severe concussion, maybe a mild one. Just rest a bit and take painkillers for the headache. Now I'm going to treat the head wound, is that ok?" She asked. Clay nodded. She then turned to Tracy.

"Since Clay is underage-"

"Here is Mayor Block's number. His billing information is already on file." Tracy said, holding out a business card. Dr Rose took it.

"Ok, I'll be right back. If you need urgent attention, hit that button there." She said, pointing to a button beside the bed. Clay nodded and then she left. Tracy sighed and leaned back in her chair.

"Do you know what really happened to my head?" Clay asked her. Tracy hesitated, but shook her head. Clay scoffed, also leaning back against the bed. "Well my father knows exactly what happened." He muttered.

His father got mad again. It's not an unusual sight, but he was particularly ticked off this morning, apparently about the interview that happened last night, and also the whole stolen safe situation.

Clay isn't even quite sure what happened, all he knew was that Drista had pissed the Mayor off even more. He heard the yelling from a few rooms away and went towards it. The second he entered the room, his father turned to him. Drista was sitting down, tears rolling down her face

from being yelled at.

Apparently him walking in without knocking first was the worst crime in the world. Or maybe it was just the limit to Mayor Block's rage level. But it resulted in the man throwing the empty mug in his hand at Clay. He barely had time to react, and the impact made him fall to the ground.

Drista had screamed and sprinted over to him, calling his name. He was unresponsive for maybe five seconds, but then sat up, putting a hand to his head, which had begun gushing blood.

"Tracy!" His father had yelled, and the assistant came running in, eyes widening at Clay on the floor with a bleeding head. "Owen is back right? Get Owen to drive Clay with you to the hospital. Drista, I'll get Clemens to drive you to school." Their father said. Drista just nodded, unable to fight him anymore, but her eyes never left Clay.

"I'm fine." Clay tried to reassure her, but she shook her head at him, eyeing the amount of blood.

"I thought he was a soccer player." Mayor Block scoffed, before leaving the room.

It wasn't the first time the Mayor has thrown things. It's his impulse when he's angry. And it's definitely not the first time it's hit Clay either. But it's the first time he has needed the hospital.

So long as Drista isn't the target, Clay doesn't care if he takes the hit.

•

George ignored his mom and slammed the door to his room, collapsing on the bed. He could barely remember what happened in the ER, all he knew was that when he came to his senses, he had a psychiatrist and a sleep psychologist both speaking to him in a hospital room.

They didn't make him sleep, since he had made it very clear he didn't want that. But they asked him more questions about his sleep and habits. It felt like another interrogation. They were judging him.

Despite George's wishes, he was prescribed medication for his sleep. He could not for the life of him remember the name of the one they suggested, since there were so many. But he remembered the rules that followed with taking it.

*Have 15 minutes before bedtime.*

Do not mix with alcohol or other drugs (including prescription)

Take no more than two in a 20-hour period

And the answer to George's biggest question *what if I need to wake up*. They said to take it when you are able to get at least seven hours of sleep.

So George decided then that he would not and could take the medicine. He will get natural sleep himself, since he needed to be sure the alert sound could wake him up. If he's passed out because of medication, his body may not wake him up to the sound.

The city is more important than one teenager's sleep.

There was a knock at the door, and after a moment, his mother slowly came in, holding the clear bottle.

"Do you want me to look after it, or you?" She asked. George scoffed.

"I will." He said. His mom looked at him, chewing on her lip in thought.

"Actually, I might hold onto it, I'll get you to take it the same time I take my night medication." She said, a small smile on her face, and pocketed the bottle. George was staring at the wall.

"I'll hold onto it, Mom." He said.

"I think this way I can make sure you're actually taking it." She said, her tone with a bit of warning letting George know she's made her decision. He didn't respond, still staring at the wall.

"Clay wanted me to ask you to call him." She said. That got George's attention. He snapped his head to face her.

"Clay? Why did you talk to Clay?"

"Do you not remember seeing him at the ER?" She asked. George sat up.

"What was he doing there?"

"A head injury. He seemed ok, through. Check in with him, he seemed worried about you too." She said. George nodded, grabbing his phone which he hadn't touched since this morning. "Take the rest of the day easy, I don't even want to see you standing." She said, nodding her head at the ankle brace on George's foot. He nodded.

"Thanks mom." He mumbled. She smiled and came over, giving him a kiss on the top of the head.

"Just rest, I'll call you down for dinner then you can take the medication." She said. George nodded, his mind already thinking of ways to avoid it. Lorna left the room, and George pulled up Clay's contact.

George hated phone calls, and he hated talking to Clay. Both were extremely anxiety-inducing for him, but he felt like he had no choice. He needed to know if Clay was ok too.

He took a deep breath and pressed the call button, his hand shaking as he brought the phone up to his ear. It rang for a few seconds, but Clay finally answered.

"Hi George. How are you feeling? You ok?" Clay asked.

"Y-yeah, I'm ok. I don't really remember what happened though. Apparently you had a head injury? Are, um, are you ok?" George asked.

"Yeah I'm fine, smashed it into the dining table like an idiot. Got a few stitches but it's numb so I don't feel it."

"I'm glad you're ok." George said softly.

"Thanks. And... so what happened with you?"

"Well, I was like super out of it but when I came to my senses, there was a psychiatrist and sleep psychologist both talking to me. Long story short, got prescribed medication for my *chronic insomnia*." George said with a humourless laugh. Clay didn't think it was awfully funny though.

"Chronic insomnia? I didn't realise it was that bad. How long have you had it?"

"Maybe a few months."

"You should have told someone sooner, George. That's a long time without good sleep."

"It's not as bad as the diagnosis makes it seem, I swear."

"At least you'll get good sleep now, with the meds." Clay said with hope.

"Hm. Yeah." George responded. "So. Um, what exactly happened... at the hospital?"

"Do you not remember anything?" Clay asked.

"Not after I saw the ER doctor. It's kind of a blur."

"Well, you came rushing into the waiting room, I stopped you from running out of the hospital entirely. You were freaking out, repeating how you didn't want to sleep. A nurse injected you with something to make you calm down and then... yeah... that's it. They wheeled you away." Clay said.

"Was that it?" George asked, Clay sounded like he wasn't saying something.

"I think so."

"Ok. I-I didn't say anything weird did I?" George asked, nervous of what drowsy George could have revealed to Clay.

"No, you didn't. Nothing I thought weird anyway." Clay chuckled.

"Ok, that's good." George said.

Silence filled the call, making George uncomfortable as he tried to think of something to fill it.

"Hey, I was wondering if you were free sometime this week. Maybe you and Nick. We could work on the bio report. I'm having some trouble with it but I think we could put our brains together. Plus I'm feeling kind of lonely in my house." Clay said. But he sounded slightly off, like he was a bit upset.

"Are you ok?"

"What? Why wouldn't I be?"

"You sounded sad at the end there."

"I'm fine, just... a lot of things aren't really going my way, and I need some distractions." He said. George frowned.

"If you need to talk about anything, you can tell me."

"You don't want to hear me rant."

"I do. I like listening to you." George said, closing his eyes as he cringed yet again. He said those stupid words again. He sounded obsessed.

"I can't really say them. It's private."

"That's ok. But if you need anything, I'm here." George said, his voice soft, making Clay smile slightly. It was nice knowing someone was there, even if they couldn't do anything.

"Thanks George. So yeah, thoughts on bio study group?"



"Um. Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. We can text the group chat to see when we are all free." George said.

"You guys could come to my house." Clay said. George's eyes widened slightly in shock.

"Wait... your house?" He didn't think that's what he meant.

"I'll have to ask my father, since I've never had friends over before. I think it'll be ok, especially since it's for studying." Clay said. George raised an eyebrow, not expecting the Mayor to agree to that.

"That would be nice." George said, cringing at his words.

"Yeah. Anyways, I've got to go. I'll see you at school tomorrow right? Unless your ankle is really bad still?"

"It will be fine. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Have a good sleep, Georgie." Clay said. George almost choked at the nickname. *When did he start saying that.*

"Y-you too." George said, then promptly hung up, dropping his phone into the bed. *Clay invited me to his house.*

•

After dinner, his Mom brought George to her bathroom, where she kept her medication and his. He wasn't certain what exactly she took, probably just women or adult things. She filled up a cup of water and opened up his container, pouring two pills into his hand.

"What happens if I only take one?" He asked, eyeing the meds nervously.

"I think it makes you super drowsy, but may not guarantee to make you sleep." She said. George bit his lip, his hand shaking slightly as he held them. His mom put her hand over his, noticing her son's discomfort. "I'll tell you what. How about for the first night, you just take one. To get your body used to it, and so you don't freak out about it." She said. George nodded, a sigh of relief.

"That sounds good." He said, and was telling the truth. Sleepy is what he wanted. He didn't want to be knocked out, he still needed to wake up if he needed.

"Ok, but how do you feel about sleeping in here with me tonight? Your father has an overnight shift. I want to make sure you don't react badly to the medication." Lorna said, as she put one of the pills back into the container, sealing the lid and putting it in the cabinet, taking out her own medication.

"I'll be fine, Mom. You don't need to worry." George said.

"Ok, sweetie." She said.

George took a deep breath, and swallowed the pill, following it down with a few gulps of water.

"I'm proud of you George. Get some rest." Lorna said, giving him a kiss on the top of the head.

"You too, love you." He said, her returning the love you before he limped out of the room, back to his own.

He lay down on his bed, and sighed. Maybe the meds could actually help. Even if he only took one, it wouldn't have the same effect as two so it won't be as bad as he was expecting, right? It'll be fine.

Turns out one pill makes George sleep-walk.

## Chapter End Notes

This story is already so long. If someone reads it all in one go, I'll be bloody impressed.

Twitter: @LottiaraT

# It doesn't feel good to not have a voice

## Chapter Summary

George and Dream are summoned to fight a villain that is taking people's voices... and targeting someone that they both recognise

## Chapter Notes

TW// r slur (censored)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"I swear I heard noises downstairs last night." Lexi said in the drive to school.

"That was George." Lorna said, glancing at her son who had his head rested against the window, his eyes half closed.

"What?" He mumbled.

"He was sleep-walking. Going to the kitchen and just sitting at the bench, writing like he had a pen in his hand and paper in front of him. It was quite creepy actually." Lorna said. George lifted his head.

"I did?"

"Yes. I just directed you back to my room, making you go back to sleep where I could watch you. You didn't sleep-walk again though, just tossed a lot and woke up a bunch."

"I remember waking up a ton, and being confused why I wasn't in my-" His yawned interrupted him.

"Is it the medication's fault?" Lexi asked.

"Yes. He didn't have the complete dose but I bet he's tired now because of the restless sleep." Lorna said.

"I'm not that tired." He said, as they pulled up.

"Sure. Be gentle on your ankle ok?" She said. George nodded and left the car with Lexi.

"George!" He heard Nick's voice, and an arm around his shoulders. He barely stepped two feet away from the car.

"Hey."

"My god, you look like a mess. Why haven't I heard from you in ages?" Nick said.

"Long story." George mumbled, letting his friend lead him inside. He was limping slightly, but Nick didn't seem to worry too much about his friend's ankle, more excited to finally talk with George after the weekend of his friend basically ghosting him and yesterday when he went home early.

"Ok, so how the hell did you fall down the stairs?" He asked George, when they reached their usual spot near the lockers.

"Tripped. It was fine but I made it worse, so we went to the ER where they gave me this ankle brace." George said, but it couldn't be seen under his sock. It peeked out the top and made it look slightly thicker, but you couldn't tell too much aside from the limping.

"Man. You are clumsy."

"Yeah. Anyways, then the doctor sent me to a sleep psychologist and I got prescribed meds for chronic insomnia." George said with his thumbs up. Nick's cheerful face turned to concern.

"You actually have insomnia? Like for real?" George nodded. "Wow. I'm sorry, I never realised how bad it was. Did the meds help?" He asked.

"Well, I took half a dose last night because I was anxious about it. It made me sleepwalk and didn't really help. So I don't know yet." George said.

"Maybe try the full dose tonight. It could help." Nick said. It was weird seeing him being serious. George shrugged.

"Yeah. Maybe." George said.

"Now to the most important thing." Nick said, and George rolled his eyes subtly, knowing what he was going to bring up now. "The Tv interview. You still haven't seen it?" He asked.

"No, I haven't." George said.

"Oh. My. God. It went awful. It was so cool seeing them both like talk about their powers and stuff. But the interview lady made it so awkward, asking about their relationship statuses. GNotFound got really mad, rightfully so, and they both left the set. The show then changed to a different topic, something about someone new who wants to run for mayor." Nick said. George cringed.

"Why do you think the heroes leaving was rightfully so?" George asked, curious on Nick's opinion.

"Well she was clearly overstepping boundaries. They are superheroes, not celebrities, like GNotFound said. The whole interview was off. It was weird." George nodded.

"Sounds like the interview didn't really go too well."

"Duh. But, we did find out Dream and GNotFound are both minors. They must be in high school, what if we already know them!" Nick said, a small amount of excitement on his face. George chuckled nervously.

"I doubt it. There are a few high schools in the city, and maybe they aren't even in high school. They could have dropped out. Or be in middle school." George said.

"George, have you even looked at them? They are clearly at *least* 16 or 17. Have you seen how tall Dream is? Plus their voices are mature. And realistically, I don't think they would have been given

their powers if they were younger than like 16."

"It's still likely they go to our school." George swallowed.

"I guess so, but how weird is it to think that you could like, know them, but not know you know them. You know?"

"What?"

"I know what I mean." Nick said with a dismissive wave.

"Um. Anyways. Who's the person you said was running for Mayor?" George asked, confused at the fact this was the first he was hearing of it.

"Oh, it's not official yet. But this new guy wants to run in the next election. He's building his campaign at the moment." Nick shrugged.

George's eyebrows raised. The thought of a new Mayor... that would be heaven.

"What's his name?"

"I think it was like... Sam something." Nick waved away the thought like it wasn't important.

"Hi, George, hi Nick." A voice interrupted, and they both turned to see Clay, with a bandage on his head.

"What the hell happened to you!" Nick said.

"I actually saw him at the ER." George said. Nick scoffed.

"What the fuck? Why is everyone in hospital and no one tells me!" Nick exclaimed, making George laugh slightly.

"So how exactly did that happen?" Nick asked, pointing at his head. Clay nervously laughed.

"Oh. Um. I tripped into the dining table. No biggy, just a few stitches." He said with a shrug.

"Just a few stitches? They literally sewed your head back together." Nick said, and then proceeded to fake gag.

"I'm fine. What about you George? How was your sleep?" Clay asked, turning to the Brit.

"Oh. Pretty bad, I only took half the dose cause I was nervous. I ended up sleep-walking." George said, fiddling with his bag strap.

"Really? I've never sleep-walked. Do you remember it?"

"Nope. Mom took me back to bed." He explained.

"I saw your text about the study group later this week by the way. I think that is a genius idea because I have not even started the assignment. Plus I don't understand it. This way I can copy off you guys." Nick grinned, putting an arm on George's shoulder. Clay laughed and George scowled.

"I was thinking Friday? At my house." Clay said.

"Will your father be ok with us there?" George asked nervously, shoving Nick off him.

"Well. I think so, because we will just be studying. I mean, I'm kind of grounded, but maybe..." Clay said with hope.

"I am also grounded but I'm sure mom would let me if it's for study." George said.

"Ooo what if we had a sleepover! I haven't had one in ages!" Nick said. George elbowed him in the side.

"Nick! You can't just invite yourself to sleepover at someone's house. What's wrong with you!" George said. But Clay was laughing.

"I can't guarantee my father will say yes, but I'll see. I haven't had a sleepover since elementary school either so it could be fun! We could play minecraft." Clay said, and Nick cheered.

George nervously chewed on his lip, and fiddled with his bag strap. He can't have a sleepover. For a multitude of reasons. It seems like he can't do anything now days, but a sleepover is possibly the worst idea so far.

Clay looked at George and saw his discomfort.

"Oh, you'll be able to bring your meds George. But if you don't want to, that's ok. You can come for the studying part and leave before night." Clay said with a kind smile. George shrugged slightly.

"I'll see." He said softly.

The bell rang, and all three boys sighed.

"Man, I hate Wednesdays. Come on, we've got gym." Nick said, grabbing an arm each and dragging his two friends along. George stumbled slightly and winced, but Nick didn't notice. Clay did however.

"Nick, careful. His ankle." Clay said, letting go of Nick and looking over at George.

"I'm ok. I have to sit out of gym though." George said, tenderly putting his foot back on the ground and walking again.

"I do too." Clay gestured to his head. "We can sit out together." He said with a smile.

"You're both going to leave me. I'm sitting out too then." Nick crossed his arms over his chest.

But when they got to their class, the teacher told Nick that no, he couldn't sit out because he wanted to. Only if he had an injury.

So George and Clay sat on the bleachers in the gym while the rest of their class played volleyball. They were silent for a few minutes.

"So have you told anyone what actually happened with your ankle?" Clay asked, his eyes also glancing to the graze on George's cheek.

"Um. Yeah, I fell down the stairs."

"But what about those guys who-"

"What guys." George cut him off, giving Clay a stare. Clay sighed.

"George, it's not ok what they did. They pushed you." Clay said.

"It's not a bit deal, Clay. Can we please not talk about it." George said softly. Clay shook his head.

"We should talk about it. Nothing that is happening is ok. The least you should be able to do is talk about it. You could tell a teacher-"

"That's just going to get them in trouble and me more of a target. I don't want to do anything about it, it'll just get worse, and they'll retaliate. People will forget about this soon anyways. I don't need help." George said, turning back to the game.

"But I want to help." Clay said.

"I don't need it." George said, his fists clenching.

"Can you at least talk to someone? Talk to Nick, he's worried about you."

"Why would Nick be worried about me." George scoffed.

"He said you bottle things up until you explode. And that you don't share things with people."

"So what? I'm fine."

"Are you though?"

"Yes I am."

"I don't think you are-"

"Clay! You don't know me!" George stood up. He immediately regretted his outburst, putting his hands in his hair and gripping it.

Everything anyone ever did was interrogate him. Interrogate him about sleep. About his civilian life. About his personal issues. Everyone thinks they know him better than they do. But no one knows George. Not a single soul on this planet knows George through and through.

And no one ever will.

"I... I know I don't know you extremely well..." Clay trailed off, but George just sighed.

"Sorry." He mumbled, and then walked away, still limping only slightly, down the stairs of the bleachers and out of the gym. He couldn't hear Clay following, which made him relax.

Why does he keep lashing out? At the interviewer, at Clay, at Dream, at his Mom, at Nick. He keeps exploding at everyone when they even try to get him to open up.

George walked through the empty halls once again, suddenly feeling on edge. He didn't particularly want to get pushed down the stairs again.

He turned around and saw someone at the end of the hall abruptly stop when he turned. Clay was standing there, and he awkwardly put his hands in his pockets when George saw him. The two boys stared at each other for a moment.

"I... I didn't want you to get hurt again." Clay said sheepishly. George didn't respond. He *wanted* to say that he didn't need to be followed or watched like a kid. Clay walked over to George.

"I know we haven't been friends for that long, but I do care about you, George. So does Nick. We just want to make sure you're ok." He said. George chewed on the inside of his cheek, lost for words in response.

A loud ding echoed through the corridor and George and Clay both felt their hearts drop. They both pulled out their phones.

## **CODE RED**

**supervillain stealing voices targeting a high school girl. dream and gnotfound needed**

George felt his grip tighten on the phone.

"Hey, I have a question." Clay asked, pocketing his phone and looking at George who was desperately racking his brain for an excuse.

"Uh. Yeah?" George said, also putting away his phone.

"To book an appointment with Dr Puffy, do you go to the receptionist?" He asked.

George looked at him curiously.

"You want to see her?" He asked. Clay shrugged, and nervously fiddled with his fingers.

"Father said I couldn't, but I think I want to talk to someone about things." He said, almost shyly. George smiled, almost entirely forgetting his outburst only minutes ago.

"Yeah. The receptionist can book an appointment, or you can email Puffy." George said. Clay nodded.

"Ok. Thanks George. Um. Look, like I said, we are all here for you if you need anything. I'll support you no matter what you do. I'm going to go see the receptionist now, I'm sorry I'm leaving you again." Clay said. George felt his lip almost twitch into a smile at how easy it was to leave again.

"I'm here for you too Clay. If you need to talk about anything." George said, slightly softer. Clay gave George a pat on the shoulder, before speed-walking away, leaving George in the corridor.

George's eyes followed Clay for a few seconds, before he turned the other way to leave the school.

*Good on Clay for seeing someone despite his father's wishes.*

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"I'm so confused." Dream said. George stood beside him as GNotFound, at the police station.

"I don't know how else to explain it. The villain seems to have a personal vendetta against this girl. I have no clue what she did to them." The sergeant said.

"Where's the villain now?" George asked.

"On their way. We have a group trying to slow them so you could get here. You need to protect her, the villain really seems to want to hurt her."



"And the villain is, what? Taking people's voices?" Dream asked.

"Yes. Detective Link, come over here." The sergeant called. A woman jogged over, and the sergeant gestured to her. "Try to talk."

She opened her mouth but nothing came out as her lips moved. George and Dream both squinted at her.

"Can she scream?" George asked. The women tried, but no sound. "That's so weird. Ok. Who is the girl being targeted?" George asked, turning back to the sergeant. He dismissed Detective Link and gestured for Dream and George to follow.

"Why can't she stay here? Isn't it safer here?" Dream asked.

"The villain knows she's in protective custody. She needs to be somewhere else." The sergeant said, and opened a door for them to go through.

"What's her name?" George asked.

"Violet Green. A senior at Pandora high." The sergeant said.

George and Clay both tensed at the name, and turned to see the pretty brunette girl sitting down. Her face lit up when she saw them, and she jumped up, running over.

She squealed and wrapped her arms around George.

"GNotFound! Oh my God, thank you! Thank you thank you! I knew you would come save me." She said. George's mouth was open in shock, and he didn't hug her back. In fact, he pushed her off, but not too harshly.

"Wh-why is she being targeted?" Dream asked, staring at Violet. George took a step away from the girl who was grinning at him.

"That's something you can ask her. But you need to get her out of here now." He said, and a loud banging followed. "The villain has a hoverboard, and is trying to break through the glass." The sergeant said.

George looked at Dream.

"Alright. Let's get her out of here first and figure out what to do about the villain. We can't lose our voices before using our powers." George said.

"What if we lose them after we've used the power?" Dream asked, as George glanced at Violet again, who latched onto his arm. It thoroughly confused him how affectionate she was being.

"It's not as bad, because you'll be transforming back anyways automatically. If we lose our voice before we use our power, we can't activate our power or say the detransformation words." George said

"And we will be stuck like this..." Dream said, his eyes wide.

"Well, apart from removing the jewel. Except, then we won't be able to transform back again, and that will be no help to defeating the villain, or any future ones." George nodded, and another loud bang came from the front of the station. George looked at Violet.

"Ok, let's get her out of here. Dream, you carry her, she can't keep up if she runs." George said,

trying to pry Violet's fingers off his upper arm.

"I want GNotFound to carry me." Violet said, her lips pouting. George felt his eye twitch, and he looked at Dream who was covering his mouth trying not to laugh.

"Ok. Whatever. Dream, lead the way." George said, picking Violet up. She wrapped her arms around his neck tightly, almost choking him. Dream took off through the police station, towards a back exit the sergeant directed them too.

They left the building, and looked around for somewhere to go.

"Where can we hide her?" Dream asked. George winced when Violet's nails dug into his neck slightly.

"Anywhere. I don't care. Go." George said, and Dream started running again, George following.

There was a swooshing sound in the air behind them, and they both turned to see a woman head to toe in pink on a hoverboard zipping towards them in the air.

"Give her to me!" She yelled, pointing a sword down towards them.

"Dream, go!" George yelled, as a beam was shot near them, from the sword. They ran through the streets, dodging the beams and trying to think of somewhere to go.

"This is useless. Dream, take her to the mansion. I'll distract with my bow." He said, forcing Dream down the alleyway and handing Violet over. Dream had wide eyes.

"Take her *where?*!" He asked. George shook his head, snapping his bow.

"No arguments. Just go. I'll meet you there in a few minutes." He said, and ran back out the way her came into the street, shooting an arrow that only just missed the woman in a grey colour to him.

"Where is she!" The villain screamed.

"Why do you care!" George yelled back, running behind some parked cars.

"She doesn't deserve her voice! All she does is bully people and spread lies!" She yelled back, shooting at the car.

*Well. I see no lie there.*

"That doesn't give you the right to hurt her."

"It does! She threatened to expose me to the school. And she exposed one of my friends." She said.

"That's awful, I know. But taking her voice isn't going to fix anything."

"Of course not. I have this sword for a reason!" She yelled. George ran and shot another arrow, and went back into another side street out of her view.

"Hurting her makes you just as bad as her." George said.

This was new. Normally the villain's goal is to just to cause problems for the whole city, and take their jewels. But this villain for some reason has a personal goal as well. What the hell was Blade's plan? Did he know this would happen?

"Nothing is as bad as *Violet*. She outed my classmate and is threatening to do it to me." She said.

George froze. As far as he knew, the only person at their whole school who had been recently outed was himself. This girl must go to his school too, if she knows Violet.

"Who is this student?" George asked, dropping his guard while he was hidden to focus on her reply.

"That doesn't matter! She's an awful person who doesn't deserve anything. Especially not her voice!" She yelled, and zipped around the corner, shooting a beam straight at George.

He wasn't ready, and it hit him square in the chest, the force pushing him on the floor, against the wall. He gasped, and held his chest, where a searing heat was coming from it. He looked back up to see the girl come closer, holding out her arm.

"Give me the sapphire." She said, a mischievous glint in her eye. George jumped up, and grabbed her arm, pulling her off the hoverboard and pushing her into the ground. She got up and held out her sword, slashing it at him. He dodged and backed away, trying to line up an arrow, but she was too close to hitting him.

George tried to say the word *Shield*. But nothing happened. Nothing came out of his mouth. The villain saw this and laughed.

"Doesn't feel great to not have a voice, does it?" She said, and swung the sword into his arm. He couldn't yell either, just clutched the now bleeding arm. He looked around, trying to find a solution.

He looked back at her, and dove at her feet, knocking her to the ground. She didn't lose her grip on the sword though, so George chose to use this opportunity to run instead. He heard her scream in frustration as he got away, running down a number of random side streets, in the vague direction of the mansion.

When he finally made it, the guards let him in and escorted him to the room Dream and Violet were apparently in.

"G!" Dream yelled as soon as he entered, running over. The room was fairly empty, it seemed like an office that no one used. Dream saw George's injury and his eyes went wide, helping him to sit down on a chair.

Violet gasped too, coming over to George.

"Are you ok? What happened? Where's the villain?" Dream asked. George opened his mouth to respond, but nothing came out.

"GNotFound, is she coming to get me now?" Violet asked, a frown on her face. Dream gently pushed her to the side, getting in front of George.

"She shot you didn't she." He said. George nodded. Dream's eyes fluttered down to his pendent, still shining a bright blue. "And you haven't used your power." He said. George nodded again. Dream facepalmed. "This is bad."

"Why? What's going on?" Violet asked.

"He can't use his power. Or detransform without taking off his pendent. But if he does, then he can't help in the fight. And we just have to hope that if we take her power, he will get his voice

back." Dream said, standing up straight and beginning to pace. George shook his head, grabbing a notebook and pen.

*I just need a second to heal a bit and I'll go back. You stay here with her*

George wrote, passing the pad to Dream who read it, tracing his fingers over the writing.

"You have nice hand writing." He said, looking at George, who scowled. "And no way. I'm the one who can actually use their power, you stay and keep watch."

"I agree. GNotFound will protect me." She said, coming over and sitting on George's lap, burying her head into his shoulder. "I'm scared. You'll protect me right."

George felt a muscle in his jaw tense in anger. Dream noticed and suppressed a smile.

"Yeah. GNotFound should stay here." Dream said, a pout matching Violet's finding a way onto his smug face.

George stood up, depositing Violet onto the chair, and turning to Dream, snatching the pen and paper out of his hands.

*I know why the villain is mad at Violet. She said that Violet threatened to expose her to the school. And she was cruel to someone who was outed.*

George didn't want to tell Dream exactly what Violet was going to expose her for. And he also didn't want to mention that Violet was the one who outed someone.

Dream read it and his eyes went wide. "She's a senior at Pandora high too?" Dream asked. George nodded. "I know the student that got outed, not that it's really important." Dream said. George felt himself freeze. Of course. George spoke to Dream about all his issues. Of course Dream knows who it is. Of course Dream puts two and two together and realises George Davidson was the one outed.

Clay suddenly began to panic at what he had revealed.

"I mean. I don't know him. I just may have spoken to him a few times. Not many times. Just occasionally, casually when I've saved him. I just remember him mentioning it once." Clay quickly tried to justify himself, unsure if G would approve of his occasional nightly strolls to speak to a random boy.

George furrowed his eyebrows. He knows Dream is lying, he's spoken to George not just when he's saved him. Why is he lying about visiting George a couple of times? Is that something he should be mad about, if it wasn't George he has visited?

*Whatever. Let's just leave Violet here and we can both go fight.*

"You should stay. You're injured and can't speak." Dream said. George gestured to his arm which was basically fine now. "Just let me handle this one. You stay, she clearly wants you to." Dream said, raising an eyebrow at the girl behind George. They both turned to her, and she was smiling, batting her eyelids at George.

George turned back around, a scowl on his face and teeth bared.

*I'd rather shoot myself than stay here with that brat*

Dream chuckled and then pulled George away from Violet. "What do you have against her?" He whispered.

*She's annoying. And clearly isn't a good person. And she won't take a hint*

"Want me to tell her you're gay? That would get her off you." Dream whispered with a laugh. George shook his head, wishing Dream could see the glare he was shooting him behind his goggles.

*Come on, let's go*

"Ok. Violet, we are going to go fight the villain. Can you stay here until we are done?" Dream said. Violet started tearing up.

"What if she finds me?" Violet said in a small voice. George wanted to punch the fakeness out of her.

"It's ok. We won't let her find you." Dream said in a similar soft voice. George stared at him incredulously. Was he falling for her act?

"GNotFound. Dream. Can someone explain the meaning of this!" The mayor's voice interrupted.

The two heroes slowly turned to the door, where the tall man was, his face red in anger. George opened his mouth to explain, but forgot he lost his voice. He swallowed nervously, turning to Dream.

"The, um, the villain is targeting this girl. And um, we needed to hide her somewhere." Dream said, his voice clearly showing his unease.

"And you decided to bring her... to the mansion." He said, his voice raising even more. Dream stood closer to George subconsciously.

"Y-yeah. We couldn't leave her at the station, the villain knew-"

"But you decided the mansion is better? Come put the mayor and his house and family in danger! Are you a fucking idiot, Dream!" He yelled.

George stood forward, raising his hand. Block turned to him.

"What?" He spat. George grabbed Dream's arm and pulled him out of the room, gesturing for the mayor to follow. He didn't like how Violet was listening.

In the hallway, George pointed to himself, and then to the room they were just in and then to the floor. The mayor looked at Dream. "Is he r\*t\*rded?" He asked. George dropped his hand and felt his face heat up in anger too.

"He's trying to tell you that it was his idea to bring her here." Dream said softly. The mayor turned back to George, looking down at him. George stared back with the same intensity. "He can't speak, the villain took his voice." Dream said.

"Finally a good villain. Sounds like they did everyone a favour. No longer needing to listen to GNotFound's ridiculous arguments and idiotic ideas. Maybe he will finally take a step back and learn to listen." The mayor laughed. George balled his hands into fists.

"If only they took his voice *before* the interview." He sneered. George took a step forward, but

Dream grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

"I will speak to you both at a later time about the other more pressing matters. But I see you're busy babysitting." The mayor said, referring to Violet. The more pressing matters were probably his stolen safe and the interview that happened yesterday.

George was not looking forward to that meeting, where they will definitely be lectured.

"Well, Dream, have fun looking after your r\*t\*rded coworker, maybe the villain will do us all a blessing and keep him silent forever." The mayor said, and turned to leave. George just wanted him to leave already. But Dream took a step forward.

"He's not-" Dream was cut off when the mayor turned back around. George saw Dream falter, looking almost scared at the Mayor's sudden movement.

"He's not *what* Dream." The mayor said. Dream's mouth open and closed like a fish, frozen.

After a second, George realised it was hopeless. He tugged on Dream's arm, pulling him backwards. The mayor laughed.

"If I didn't know any better, I'd say Dream has never had a voice." The mayor said to Dream, and then left.

Dream was still staring as the mayor walked away, but George tugged on him again, and he snapped out of it.

"I'm sorry." Dream said quietly, but George shook his head, as if to say it doesn't matter. He wrote on the notebook again.

*We need to go now*

Dream nodded, and both heroes left the mansion, leaving Violet under the protection of the guards.

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"Don't point it at me!" Dream said to George, who was holding the pink sword from the villain. George wanted to scream in frustration. This entire fight has been exhausting for him, unable to communicate to Dream who has just said annoying things the whole time, fully aware George has no comeback.

George pointed the sword closer to Dream, his teeth bared in anger. Dream chuckled, he had the villain pressed against the floor, holding her hands behind her back.

"Ok, ok. I'll take it off." He said, reaching for the bracelet on her wrist. "I'm only doing this because I miss your sweet sweet voice." Dream said, and George kicked him.

He took off the bracket, and the girl transformed back. At the same time, George gasped, and put a hand on his throat.

"Hello?" He tested, and sighed in relief when he could speak. "Yes! Thank fuck. Holy hell that was awful. God. You're an idiot, Dream." George said, as Dream got off the girl, standing up to face his partner.

"Really? That's the first thing you say to me?"

"Well it's deserved." George retorted, and then they both turned to the girl, who sat up, holding her

head.

It was Niki.

George's eyes went wide, and so did Clay's. Both heroes went to her side and helped her to her feet.

"Wh-what happened?" She asked. George was in shock, recalling their conversation from earlier.

"You were a villain." Dream said, also in shock.

"I... I was?" She asked, horrified. She started tearing up. "Did I hurt people?"

"No, no one got hurt. It's ok." George said, but Niki was still upset. "You did seem to have a vendetta against one girl though. Violet." George said. Niki looked up, in shock.

"Is she ok?"

"Yes, she's safe. Why were you so upset with her?" Dream asked. George bit his lip and gently pushed Dream away, just as his ring started flashing.

"You need to go. I'll get her to the police and take Violet home." George said. Dream nodded.

"Ok. Also, I really did miss your voice. I'm not very good at standing up to the Mayor like you." Dream said, fiddling with his pen.

"You always try your best, that's all that matters." George said. "See you Dream."

"Bye G." Dream said, and jogged away.

George turned to Niki who was wiping her tears.

"Hey, what was your name?" He asked.

"Niki. And I really didn't mean to be a villain. I don't even remember anything." She said.

"It's not your fault, Niki. The Blade did this. You weren't in control." George said.

"But you said I targeted Violet. That's not something I was forced to do. That's something I did myself." She said, covering her face.

"Your subconscious feelings and anger came out, that's the Blade and Violet's fault. Not yours. What Violet did was awful." He said. Niki looked at him.

"Do you know what she did?" She asked nervously. George smiled kindly.

"You told me a little bit. You said she outed one of your friends and threatened to..."

"To out me." Niki finished, looking away. George nodded. Niki took a deep breath. "I'm bisexual." She said. George smiled.

"Can I hug you?" He asked. She nodded and he hugged her, letting her hug back. "That's amazing, Niki."

"I had only told one person, my friend Wilbur. I've known for a while but when my friend came out, well, was outed, it was kind of reassuring to know I'm not alone. So I finally told someone." She said.

George was in shock. Maybe Wilbur and Clay were right. Maybe him being out and proud actually did help someone.

"But somehow Violet overheard and threatened me. Saying she'll out me. I tried arguing, saying how awful it was for her to do that to George-

"You know she outed him?" George asked in confusion. Niki nodded.

"I don't think anyone else knows, but I know it was Violet. One of her friends was talking about how she started it. I was going to tell George, or a teacher, but then she threatened me and I'm just so scared. She said I had to get George away from Clay or else." Niki said, pulling away from the hug. George frowned.

"Why does she want George away from Clay?"

"I don't know. Seems like petty high school drama." Niki said.

"It does. I know you don't really know me, but can I suggest something?" George asked. Niki nodded. "I think you should talk to George. It seems like you are both in a similar situation. And I'm sure he would feel the same knowing he's not alone." George said, speaking exactly how he feels.

"Yeah, I was going to tell him, well thank him sort of. But I chickened out. We aren't that close. I see him as a friend but he's more of a classmate. He's closer with my other friend." Niki said.

"Even if you aren't that close, I think it would make both of you relieved to know you have each other. It seems like your high school isn't very welcoming." George said. Niki laughed.

"No, it's not." She said.

Sirens were heard nearby and George sighed.

"That's the police. Don't worry, they know your innocent, they understand the villains aren't in control. But they will have to do a lie detector test on you, just to make sure you aren't faking it. And maybe a paramedic will check up on you. But then you'll get to go home. I'm sorry about all of this. And good luck with everything Niki." George said. Niki smiled and gave him another hug.

"Thank you GNotFound. I never realised how genuine you actually are. You're even more of a hero than I thought." She said, and then pulled away as the police came.

George explained the whole thing to the police, and helped Niki into the car, feeling immensely guilty for her having to go through this, and also finding out she was bisexual without her telling him, George. He knows how it feels to not be in control of who knows.

George sighed and made his way back to the mansion to get Violet. God, he hated her with every fibre of his being. But he still had a job to do, no matter how vile of a person she may be.

"Finally." Violet huffed when George entered the room he left her in. "Is the villain gone?" She asked.

"Yes. Do you know who it was?"

"One of the many people who is pissed at me I'm guessing." She said, crossing her arms.

"Have you ever tried, being a nice person?" He said. Violet narrowed her eyes at him, and then



pouted.

"I am nice. Why? Do you hate me?" She asked. George tensed his jaw.

"Ok. I just came by to let you know that the situation is handled, and you don't have to hide out anymore. I'm sure you can find your own back to home or school or wherever." He said, and turned to leave, but she grabbed his arm.

"Can I get a lift to school? You're much faster than having to call my parents. They will be furious if they know I missed school." She said.

*Yeah, me too bitch.*

"I also have somewhere I need to be." He said. Her eyes pooled with tears again.

"Please GNotFound." She said. He bit the inside of his cheek.

"Ok. Fine. Only because I don't want the Mayor more mad at me for leaving you here." He said. Violet squealed and hugged him, making George roll his eyes.

So that's how he ended up running along rooftops holding the bitch who outed him. He was so relieved when he finally got to put her down, but groaned when he saw there was a small crowd coming over to where he dropped her off. She insisted he take her inside the school because she didn't want to walk up the stairs.

"Ok, I have to go." George said quickly, turning to jog away, but she grabbed his arm again.

"Katie!" She called out to a blonde girl who was running over. George recognised her as one of Violet's friends.

"Oh my god. No way. GNotFound! What is he doing here?" Katie asked, running over with her phone to take a photo.

"He saved my life. Isn't he the best." Violet said, and leaned over to give him a kiss on the cheek, the exact same time Katie took a photo. George stepped away, repulsed.

A small crowd had formed now.

"Ok, I'm sorry but I really have to go. Your classmate was in danger so I've brought her back. Everything is fine now, go about your day." He said, and turned to leave again but Violet didn't let go.

He was stronger, he could have pulled away, and was about to, but a voice stopped him.

"Violet? What are you doing, let him go." Clay said, and George turned to look at him. Nick was beside him, eyes gleaming in awe.

"I'm just showing my appreciation for him." Violet said, letting go of his arm. George sighed in relief sending Clay a thankful smile.

He took his opportunity to run through the crowd and out of the school.

Clay stared after him. G seemed exhausted, especially when he brought Violet back. He had to deal with everything after Clay had left. It's not like they had much of a choice, Clay had to change back.

"He's so cool, oh my God. He's even cooler in person." Nick said, as the crowd dispersed.

"Haven't you already seen him in person?" Clay chuckled.

"Well, I mean. Yeah, but I was stressed at the time, worried about where George was. I really want to talk to GNotFound sometime. I've already spoken to Dream, did you know that?" Nick asked. Clay nodded, smiling at his idiotic friend.

Clay glanced back over at Violet, who was telling everything that happened to her friends, if not a bit exaggerated. But he was most pissed off about when she kissed G on the cheek. It set something off in Clay, it made him immediately went over to intervene. He didn't like how it made his stomach flip, to see someone else kissing G.

He so desperately wanted to be the one to kiss G on the cheek.

## Chapter End Notes

I love all of your comments so much, they make my day. Especially the long ones that are so thought out. I means a lot you take the time to spare your thoughts on my work. Love you all <3

Twitter: @LottiaraT

# Feelings are confusing

## Chapter Summary

Clay sees a therapist, and George goes on a date

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay was wringing his hands together together and letting his leg bounce up and down with no desire to stop his fidgeting.

His eyes followed Dr Puffy closely as she grabbed her iPad and sat down opposite him. She gave him a kind smile.

"It's wonderful that you came to see me Clay, by your own decision." She said. Clay nodded, his eyes watching closely as she wrote something on her iPad.

"Just before we start I just have to go over the confidentiality thing-"

"I already know. Everything I say is confidential unless you think me or someone else may in danger of being hurt. Or drugs. Or suicidal thoughts. I know, my friend told me." Clay said. Puffy gave him a curious smile.

"Yes, that's right. I'm just here to support you in any way I can but I'm only a high school councillor." She said. Clay nodded, his eyes travelling to the small box of toys in front of him.

He reached out and grabbed the blue fidget spinner, immediately flicking it in his fingers.

"Why do you have toys?" He asked, tilting the spinning gadget.

"They are fidget toys. Keeps your hands busy if you need it." She said, watching him closely. Clay put the fidget spinner back and pulled out a small white cube with buttons and things on it. He furrowed his eyebrows as he rotated it, testing out all its switches and buttons.

"So if I recall, your attendance hasn't been too good, but your father denied the five appointments with me. Correct?" She said. Clay nodded, deciding the light switch on the cube was his favourite side.

"Yeah, but I think it's important to talk to people about things, so you don't explode." He said.

"That's very true. Is there anything in particular that brought you here today?" She asked. Clay looked up.

"Well, I don't really know to be honest. I've just been in my head a lot the past week or so, sort of questioning who I am." He said, clicking the switch.

"Questioning who you are? I see." She said, making a quick note. Clay sat up straighter, putting the fidget cube down with wide eyes.

"Wait, I didn't mean like I'm *questioning*. Like my sexuality. I just mean like who I am. And where I belong." He said. He knew his sexuality. He just wasn't comfortable with anyone else knowing yet. Puffy smiled and nodded.

"That's ok, Clay. It's hard for teenagers to figure out who they are. You have a lot to think about as a senior. Careers, colleges, relationships, friendships, sexuality, interests, goals. It's alright to be confused about everything." She said. Clay relaxed and sat back in his seat, his fingers choosing to fiddle with his shirt again.

"What happened to your head? If you want to share." She said. Clay hesitated.

"I got stitches after hitting it against the dining table."

"Ouch. Does it still hurt? Do you have a concussion?" She asked. Clay shrugged.

"I might. Can't really tell to be honest."

"I thought the doctor would have tested for that." Puffy commented.

"She did. Said it was mild, difficult concentrating or something. But I already have that." He said, his eyes landing on the toys again.

Puffy watched his gaze and smiled.

"Try this one. It's my personal fav." She said, picking out the Pop It fidget square. Clay took it and immediately started poking at the bubbles.

"You said you often have difficulty concentrating? Is that in class?" She asked, making a small note.

"Yeah. In class. Sometimes in conversations too, though. Or reading, god I hate reading." He said, flipping over the square and pushing the bubbles back over.

"Does reading frustrate you?" She asked. Clay nodded.

"It's dumb. I feel like the words are slipping through my mind when I have a block text to read. Like the school reading assignments. I never do well on those essays about the books. It's not that I can't read. I just find it so boring and I miss sections and have to re-read it because my mind was elsewhere." He said.

"That makes sense. Do you find that it's easy for your mind to get distracted?"

"Oh, yeah, definitely."

"How are your grades? Your schoolwork?" She asked, watching him fiddle with the Pop It.

"They are ok. When I was younger, they were really bad. Like my teachers all thought something was wrong with me because I wouldn't sit still and would have the worst mood swings. Father said I was fine though. And I guess my grades are fine. They have to be, or my father will be disappointed." He said. Dr Puffy leaned forward slightly.

"So even with some learning and self-control issues, you never saw somebody professional about it?" She asked.

Clay looked up, and put the square down on the table.

"No, never have. Father said it was useless. There was nothing wrong with me." He said. Puffy nodded, writing in her iPad for a minute.

"Those mood swings you had, could you describe them a little to me?" She asked, looking back up. Clay drummed on his knees.

"Um, I mean. I was just kind of easily irritated. It was like sometimes everything was too much and I'd get overwhelmed and snap. I was... very impulsive I guess."

"You don't get these mood swings now? Are you still impulsive?" She asked. Clay thought about it.

"Definitely not that bad of mood swings. But I think I am a bit impulsive sometimes, not thinking things through before I act. And sometimes everything feels like too much, making me irritable." He said. She nodded.

"And your father... would you describe him as strict?" She asked.

"I don't really want to talk about him today." Clay said. Puffy nodded.

"Of course, that's fine. Was there anything in particular you wanted to bring up?" She asked. Clay thought about it.

"I swear before I came here I had so much on my mind. But it's just all gone now." He said with an awkward laugh. Puffy nodded her head with a smile.

"That's perfectly normal. Sometimes all it takes is a break away from the chaos to clear your head a bit. You don't have to have anything in particular to say. It's impressive enough you took the step to talk to someone, even if you don't know what for. It's good for everyone to learn there's someone there for you, a safety rope. Someone who will listen." She said.

"Yeah. That makes sense." He said, his eyes flitting back to the toys. Puffy noticed and smiled.

"I'll tell you what. Would you like to take one of the fidgets with you to class?" She asked, leaning forward and picking up the box, tilting it towards him. Clay scrunched up his face.

"I'm not a kid." He said.

"How about you try it for a week. Just to see how you go in class with it." She said.

"Why?" Clay asked, staring at her. Puffy smiled again.

"I think your mind works too fast for your body. Fidgets are a good way to bring your senses to focus on one thing, instead of your thoughts racing all over the place. It's not childish, it's a strategy for people who fidget a lot." She said. Clay glanced in the box. "Although they seem to be quite trendy among ten year olds on TikTok for some reason." She added with a small chuckle.

"Are you sure I can take one?" He asked. She nodded, holding it closer towards him.

"Any. I have multiple of each." She said. Clay carefully looked between them, and reached in.

"Can I take this one?" He asked. She nodded and put the box back down.

"Fidget cubes are great because they can do so many things." She said. Clay twisted the small lime cube in his fingers, smiling slightly.

He looked back up at the councillor.

"Thank you, Puffy."

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"How did you sleep last night?" Nick asked George at lunch. George shrugged, unwrapping his sandwich.

"I slept the whole night." He said. Nick cheered.

"So you took the meds?" He asked. George nodded. "Both of them?"

"Yep, knocked me out pretty quick." George said.

"That's epic. Hopefully your sleep schedule will get fixed then." Nick said.

"Yeah. Hopefully."

Actually, George didn't take the pills last night. He didn't take either of them. His mother watched him as he put them in his mouth and swallowed. But as soon as he made it to his room, he spat them out, after hiding them under his tongue.

"Hey, George. Are you ungrounded yet?" Quackity asked from across the table.

"Technically no."

"I hear a technically. Surely we all go bowling again. Or laser tag." He said.

"I'll fucking destroy all of you in laser tag." Tommy said.

"Language."

"Tomathy, I'm the best." George said with a grin, leaning his forearms on the table and sending a daring stare at the sophomore. He scoffed.

"Yeah right."

"Actually, George does always comes first." Skeppy said to Tommy.

"What, how? And you're that bad at bowling?" Tubbo laughed. George rolled his eyes.

"Is everyone free today? Provided George can get parent permission." Darryl said.

"Actually, I'm not free today." George said.

"What, why?" Quackity asked.

"I'm busy with a friend." George said. Nick turned to him, a raised eyebrow.

"Who."

"It doesn't matter."

"Who!" Nick said, shaking his shoulder. George shoved his hand off.

"Xavier." George said.

That was a mistake. Because immediately the entire table made a variety of noises, some of them shouting 'what!', others making suggestive 'ooo' sounds.

"No, no no. All of you shut up. It's not like that." George said.

"Well if it's not like that then what are you doing." Skeppy said, a smirk on his face.

"Icecream." George said quietly, and everyone erupted into laughter. "It's not what you think! It's a thank you, since I helped him with his assignment."

"Big man, hate to break it to you, but it sounds like a date." Tubbo said.

"Agreed." Nick said, staring at George intensely. George shook his head.

"All of you are ridiculous. Ranboo! Surely you're on my side." George said, staring at the boy who hadn't spoken much.

"I don't have much experience, but that does sound like a date..." He said.

"Ranboo!" George scolded him.

George put his hands on his head while the table continued to lovingly mock him. *I almost regret them knowing I'm gay, despite how bloody accepting they are.*

But eventually they were interrupted by someone who stood near the table, making everyone look up, including George.

Niki was standing there, fiddling with a thread in her sweater.

"Hi, um, I was wondering if I could talk to George, unless I'm interrupting something-" She said nervously.

"No, of course you can." George said with a kind smile, grabbing his bag and going over to her, glad for the excuse to leave the table.

"Do you mind if we leave the cafeteria? It's just a bit noisy here." She said. George nodded, and followed her out.

He felt guilty that he knew what this was about, but he was relieved she was actually going to talk to him.

"Did you hear what happened yesterday?" She asked him.

"Yesterday? The villain?" He asked. She nodded, finally stopping in a quiet hallway.

"The one who was taking people's voices. It was me." She said quietly. No one knew who it was, the reporters didn't film the fight in time and the police didn't reveal anything. So George had to act surprised.

"Really? Oh my god, are you ok?" He asked. Niki nodded.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Dream and GNotFound saved me I guess." She said.

"That's good." He said, and then there was silence for a few moments. George was worried he was going to say the wrong thing. "Um. Why did you want to tell me that?" He asked.

"Um. Maybe this was a bad idea..." She said, covering her face. George bit his lip, understanding the anxiousness she is feeling.

"Hey, it's ok. It's just me." He said softly. Niki looked back at him and took a deep breath.

"I, um. While I was a villain I targeted Violet. There's a few reasons. I... I think that you deserve to know why." She said. George nodded, waiting for her to continue.

"She was the one who outed you." Niki said. George nodded again, a small sad smile on his face.

"Yeah. I had my suspicions. She was acting weird towards me and then it got spread, I'm guessing she overheard me telling Nick I had told my parents." George said, saying exactly what he would say if Niki hadn't confirmed his suspicions.

He had to think about what his responses would be if he didn't already know what she was going to say.

"You knew it was her and you haven't told anyone?" She asked. George sighed, leaning against the lockers.

"It's not going to do me any favours. I've just been waiting for it all to blow over, I don't want the stress of dealing with all that." He said honestly. She nodded, back to fiddling with her sweater.

"You were that upset with her about what she did to me? Why?" He asked, relieved his acting had improved over the past year.

"I know you're with Clay. But I've known you since we were in middle school. We've been partners for projects before. And any friend of my friends, I consider a friend." She said. George smiled.

"Thanks Niki." He said. She took another deep breath.

"But there was another reason." She said. George nodded, allowing her to continue. "Violet has threatened me about something." She said. George frowned.

"What has she done?" He asked.

"Well... oh God. I don't know how to do this." She said, covering her face again. George reached out and took one her hands, giving it a squeeze.

"It's ok, take your time." He said with a kind smile. She nodded and took a few breaths.

"I'm bisexual." She said. George immediately pulled her into a hug, grinning with genuine happiness for her that she told him. He knows how hard it is to say it.

"And sh-she overheard-" Her voice was shaky and George patted her back.

"It's ok. That's amazing Niki. I'm so glad you told me. I'm proud of you." He said.

"Thanks." She said softly. "When you were outed, and still walked around with your head held high. It was so amazing, I was in awe of your confidence. Being able to walk around freely in your own skin. It felt relieving to know I wasn't alone. And I want you to know you aren't alone either." She said.

George smiled, and pulled away from the hug.

"Thank you." He said earnestly, watching as she wiped a tear.



"No, thank you." She said. His smile fell when he remembered what Violet was doing to her, but he couldn't let her know he already knew.

"You said Violet overheard? What has she done?" He asked.

"She said I need to keep you away from Clay or she'll tell everyone I'm bi." She said. George frowned, he still didn't understand that part.

"Why does she want me away from Clay?" He asked.

"She clearly still likes him. I'm guessing she sees you as a threat." She said.

"But Clay doesn't like me, he doesn't even like guys. How can I be a threat?" He asked. Niki shrugged.

"I don't know. I'm so sorry, George. I just have no clue what to do." She said, tearing up again.

"It's ok. I'm going to help you, I promise." He said, giving her another hug. She smiled against his shoulder.

"This might sound really really weird, but your hug reminds me of GNotFound." She said. George took a breath, trying not to panic.

He chuckled and pulled away.

"GNotFound? Have you hugged him?" He asked.

"Yeah, after the fight yesterday. I sort of told him everything and he suggested I talk to you. But yeah, he hugged me. You just reminded me of his hug, you guys must be around the same height." She said, looking at George.

"Must be. I think I read somewhere he's 5'8. I'm 5'9 so." He shrugged. "Anyways, thanks again for telling me. And I'm really really proud of you. It must have been really hard to keep all that to yourself." He said. Niki smiled.

"I'm proud of you too, George." She said.

George felt his smile grow wider.

•

George was waiting out the front of the school where Xavier suggested they meet. He was feeling slightly nervous for it, since all his friends said it must be a date. But Xavier never specified.

Does George want it to be a date?

No, he still can't deny he likes Clay. But Xavier is nice too, he's just not as interested in him as he is with Clay.

"What are you waiting for George?" A cheerful voice came from behind. He turned to none other than Clay, while came up beside him.

"Oh. Just for a friend." George said.

"Oh, cool. Hey, by the way, I saw Dr Puffy today." He said. George smiled.

"Really? That's great, Clay. How did it go?" George asked. Clay shrugged.

"It was alright. She let me have one of her fidget toys." Clay said, pulling the cube out of his pocket to show George. George looked at it curiously.

"Why?" He asked.

"Not sure. She said it's to help fidgeting, which makes no sense. But it's kind of fun." He said, clicking the light switch up and down. It vaguely reminded George of Dream clicking his sword pen in and out.

"That's still awesome you went to see her." George said as Clay pocketed the toy.

"Yeah, it was a nice break from school for an hour. I was trying to think of things I wanted to talk to someone about but my mind blanked when I got there." Clay said.

"Yeah, I get that. Maybe you could talk to her about that girl you were really upset about." George suggested. He remembered how heartbroken Clay was.

"Hm. Maybe." Clay said.

"How are things... with her?" George asked. Clay sighed.

"I still really like her. I... I've been thinking about telling them how I feel." Clay said. George held his breath. "I'm not sure if I should though, I don't want to ruin things." He said.

"I mean... I wouldn't want to ruin a friendship either." George said. It was slightly selfish of him, wishing Clay's feelings towards this person would go away.

George felt his phone buzz.

### **Xavier**

Sorry I'm late, my photography  
teacher is holding me back. I'll be  
just a minute

George responded that it was fine, feeling nervous again.

"Which friend were you waiting for again?" He asked.

"Oh. Um. Xavier. I think you met him when you guys took me to the nurse." George said, suddenly worried Clay would think it is a date too.

"Oh. What are you two doing?" He asked.

"Studying. Yeah, just coding things." George said quickly with a laugh. He wasn't sure why he was lying.

"Oh, fun." Clay said. George saw Xavier coming out of the school now.

"Yeah. Anyways, I'll see you tomorrow, Clay." George said, desperate for his crush to leave. Clay nodded, looking behind him to see Xavier.

"Yeah, see you tomorrow. I'm going to ask my father if you and Nick can come study after school." Clay said, turning back to face George.

"Good luck." George said. Clay thanked him and walked away, just as Xavier arrived. George let out a small sigh of relief.

"Hey! Sorry that took a while. It was just about the school paper photos for the week. Anyways, ready for icecream?" Xavier asked. George smiled.

"Yes, I'm so ready." He said. Xavier grinned and linked his arm with George, pulling him along.

"What flavour do you like?" He asked as they walked along the street.

"I don't really have a favourite." George said.

"Really? George, that's so sad." Xavier said. George laughed, suddenly hyper aware of their linked arms. He causally unlinked them and adjusted his bag on his back, chuckling nervously.

"What about you?" He asked. Xavier put his hands in his pockets and sent George a smile.

"Well, obviously rocky road."

"Rocky road? Ew." George said, and Xavier gasped.

"You don't like rocky road!" He said.

"I'm sorry, no." George said. Xavier put a hand over his heart.

"I am deeply offended by that. You have offended me." Xavier said.

"I'm sorry, ok?" He laughed. Xavier shook his head.

"Unacceptable. Whatever flavour you pick better make up for it." He threatened, pointing in George's face. George was smiling.

"It will."

They arrived at the store, a different one to the one which George and Clay visited that one time. It was slightly busy with a few school kids, but the pair went up to the glass to look at the flavours.

"Alright Davidson. Which one will it be?" Xavier said in a dramatic voice. George hummed as he looked, a particular flavour catching his eye.

"Vanilla." He said. Xavier cracked up in laughter.

"You shat on rocky road but chose vanilla?" He said. George shrugged.

"It's plain but good."

"Alright, can't argue with that." He said with a smile and walked up to the counter. "Hi, can I get one vanilla and one rocky road." He said.

George went up beside him and pulled out some cash. Xavier took George's money and held it behind his back, holding out his own card.

"George, I told you it was my treat. That was the whole point." He said. George huffed, trying to

take his money back.

"Ugh. Not again." He muttered, feeling déjà vu.

Xavier tapped his card and then gave George his money back and the employee made their ice creams.

"Do you want to eat here or walk and eat?" Xavier asked, taking the ice creams from the employee and handing the vanilla one to George.

"We can walk, it's a bit busy here." George said. Xavier smiled and grabbed George's hand, leading him out of the store.

Xavier let go of George's hand once they left, and George was slightly relieved. He was worried Xavier thought it was a date. *Would it be so bad if it was?*

"How is your ankle?" Xavier asked. George looked down at his foot with the hidden strap.

"It's fine, I barely notice it. It's just kind of a dull pain that's always there but it's not too bad." He said.

"That's good. You know, I did some googling about sprains. You told me that you don't have to ice them and it would be fine the next day after you sleep. Dr Google told me you should ice it and wrap it so it's compressed. To stop the swelling and bruising. Did you know that?" Xavier said, looking at George.

"Oh, no I didn't." George lied.

"Well, I'm glad you went to the doctor for the splint." Xavier said, going back to licking his icecream. George continued eating his own one too.

They continued to walk down the street until they reached a park, and Xavier led them to a bench to sit and eat.

"You hang out with Nick and them right? Darryl, Quackity, Skeppy?" Xavier asked. George nodded.

"And two sophomores. Don't ask, long story." George said.

"Oh yeah. Tommy and Tubbo?" Xavier asked. George nodded.

"And you're friends with... Felicity?" George said. He used to be friends with Felicity when they were younger, but drifted apart.

"Yeah. And Seb and Darcy." Xavier said.

"They seem really cool, I've only really spoken to Felicity." George said.

"They are pretty cool. You should hang out with us some time." Xavier suggested. George nodded.

They sat for a few minutes in silence, until they both finished their desserts, and George spoke up again.

"Thank you again, for the icecream." He said. Xavier smiled.

"Of course. Thank you for the help with coding." Xavier said, glancing at George and putting an

arm around the back of the bench, behind George's shoulders.

"Anytime." George said, avoiding Xavier's eye contact by looking out at the park. But he could feel Xavier watching him, so he turned to glance at him, but Xavier reached out and gently pushed George's chin away, so he was looking forward again.

"Don't move." He said, and George could see out of the corner of his eye Xavier take something out of his bag. "You look so good in this lighting. Just look out at the park." He said.

George blushed slightly and kept looking forward, feeling slightly awkward as he heard the click of Xavier's camera.

George cautiously turned back to the blonde, who looked up at him.

"Look how golden you look." Xavier said, showing him the photo. George looked at it, and was shocked to see how good the lighting was. It made his hair look soft, and the part of his eye that could be seen twinkle.

"Wow. You're really good at that." George said, as Xavier put the camera away.

"Me? Please, that was all you. You know you're really pretty right?" Xavier said. George blushed again and awkwardly laughed.

"You are." Xavier said again, staring into George's eyes. George wasn't good at the persistent eye contact. He wasn't uncomfortable, just awkward. He looked down.

"Hey... Xavier... this might be a weird thing to mention." George started, almost immediately regretting ever talking at all. "My friends... when I told them what we were doing, they thought it was a date." He looked back up at Xavier. "I just want to clarify on what this is? It's just a thank you right?" George asked.

Xavier smiled. "I mean, it can be a date if you want it to be a date." He said.

George froze. Did he want it to be a date?

"That doesn't really clarify things." George said, and it made Xavier laugh.

"Do you want it to be a date?" Xavier asked. George was lost for words, his mouth opening and closing in confusion.

"It's ok, George." Xavier said, noticing the boy's hesitance. He gave him a kind smile. "You don't have to say anything." Xavier said.

"Wait, I... I don't know." George said, trying to find words. "What are you saying?" He asked.

"Well, I hope this doesn't ruin anything, but I think you're really cool George. I would love to go on a date with you, if that's what you want. But it's ok if it's not, I get it. I just think you're a really sweet, caring person. But you don't even have to say anything at all if you don't want to." Xavier said calmly, a patient smile on his face.

George was conflicted.

"I... I don't know."

"That's ok." Xavier said.

"No. I mean, I just... I think you're also really sweet. But I don't want to lie to you. I like someone else. I shouldn't like them, I'm pretty sure they are straight. But I don't want to go out with you if I have feelings for someone else, it's not fair to you." George said. Xavier nodded.

"That's ok. I understand that feeling, and it sucks even more when you know you probably won't end up with them. I thought I didn't have a chance with you until you came out. But I understand, I don't want to pressure you into anything." Xavier said.

"I'm really sorry."

"Don't be sorry, George. You can't control your feelings. Just know that I'll be here. If you get over your feelings for the other person, and maybe gain some for me, maybe we could try a date." Xavier said.

George hugged him.

"Thank you for being so understanding, Xavier. I don't deserve to have you as a friend." George said, and Xavier chuckled slightly.

"You deserve the world, George. Whoever he is doesn't know what he's missing." Xavier said, and pulled away slightly to look into George's eyes.

"I hope you figure everything out. I'll be here." He said, and leaned forward to place a gentle kiss on his cheek. George's face burned at the touch.

Xavier pulled away and stood up.

"You said you can only be out for an hour. Want me to walk you home?" Xavier asked, holding out a hand. George cautiously took it, allowing himself to be pulled to his feet.

•

"Can't you just send him an email?" Tracy asked Clay. He dropped his bag on the chair in his room, shaking his head.

"He'll just say no, I can convince him better in person." Clay said. Tracy frowned, and Clay noticed her glance at the bandage on his head. He sighed and put a hand over it.

"It's getting better." He said. She nodded, and checked her phone.

"Ok, well if you make it quick, you might be able to see your father in five minutes. He's very busy and stressed, so I don't know how successful your request will be." She said.

"What is he stressed about?"

"A few things. Namely how he was stolen from by a villain, also the interview with the heroes that went horribly." She said. Clay nodded.

The mayor did promise him and GNotFound that they will have a meeting soon to discuss everything. He's surprised the Mayor has waited so long to lecture them.

"Thanks Tracy." Clay said, leaving the room to find his father, nerves already growing as he thought about what he should say.

Should he start with small talk and ease into the request? Or start with the question? Or should he ask for something extremely ridiculous first so his actual request isn't so bad?

He was trying to figure out the most simplest way of asking to have his friends over without his father getting angry again.

"Enter." He heard the voice, and the guards allowed him to open the door. His father was sitting down, ruffling through some papers. He barely looked up.

"What is it Clay?" He asked harshly. Clay regretted ever even considering asking him. His father never even apologised for the mug. *Not like I was expecting a sorry.*

"Hi. Um. How has your day been?" Clay asked. His father didn't respond, and began typing on his keyboard. "Um. Anyways, so I have a big assignment coming up in a week or two and I was wondering if I could have my two group members over tomorrow so we could work on it together?" Clay asked.

"No."

"Before you say no-" Clay stopped. "Oh. Well, can I at least give you my rationale?" He asked. His father scoffed, finally looking at his son.

"What is it."

"It's an important assignment and my group members are people I'm trying to become better friends with. I never have friends over so it would just be a one time thing, and it's just to work on our bio project. We won't be disruptive, we will just stay in my room and won't disturb you at all." Clay said. His father stared at him as he rambled, and Clay found himself shrinking backwards in the stare.

"Who are these friends?"

"George and Nick. You met George at school when we had that one meeting."

"That one meeting which you ran out of, and got *grounded forever* for." His father said with narrowed eyes. Clay realised what that meant for his request.

"Ok. I'm sorry for disturbing you father." He said, and was about to leave but his father continued speaking.

"You can have them over under one condition." He said. Clay immediately turned back around, trying to hide his shock and excitement.

"What's the condition?"

"I have a chat with them."

## Chapter End Notes

CW// mentions of pills

Dream needs to stream soon  
it's been too long

# The torturous hours of silence

## Chapter Summary

George has a sleepover at Clay's house, but his insomnia keeps him awake to witness his friend having a nightmare

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Saturday we are going out." Quackity said, slamming his hand down on the table and making almost everyone jump.

"What are we doing?" Darryl asked.

"Laser tag. Someone needs to put George in his place." Quackity said, looking down at the brunette who was staring off into space, slowly eating his sandwich.

"I'm down." Nick said.

"Does that include us three?" Tubbo asked, pointing to himself, Tommy and Ranboo.

"Of course." Darryl said. Ranboo's eyes went wide.

"Us *three*?" He said.

"Well duh, you're part of the gang." Tommy said, punching Ranboo on the shoulder. The taller of the two winced at the hit, but was smiling slightly.

"Can I bring Karl? He's been talking about playing laser tag a bunch recently." Nick said.

"Yeah, of course. The more the merrier." Darryl said with a smile.

"Is everyone else coming?" Quackity said, looking at Skeppy and George. Skeppy nodded, but George was still out of it.

"He's daydreaming about his new lover boy again." Nick snickered, elbowing George to get his attention.

"Huh? Lover *what*?" George said.

"Xavier. You should invite him." Nick said, and everyone at the table joined in laughing. George didn't join in, he frowned and looked away.

"So you down for laser tag tomorrow?" Quackity asked. George looked back up.

"Oh. Um. What time?"

"How about 10am?" Darryl suggested.

"That's way to early!" Quackity complained.



"Well I'm busy at noon." Darryl said.

"Me too." Skeppy said, looking at Darryl.

"Whatever. Is everyone ok for 10am?" Quackity said, a sour look on his face. Everyone nodded except George, who bit his lip, contemplating an excuse.

"Gogy you better not say no." Tommy said, pointing a finger at George.

"Agreed. You ditched bowling." Nick said. George sighed and rubbed his face.

"Fine. I'm going to fucking destroy you all."

"Language!"

•

"I'm so excited. You guys brought your laptops right?" Clay said as they left their biology class. George and Nick both nodded. "Epic. And you're sleeping stuff?"

"Yep. I am so fudging excited to see your whole ass mansion, Clay. Do you have an indoor swimming pool?" Nick asked with glee. Clay laughed and shook his head.

Clay had immediately messaged his two friends after getting his father's permission to have them over. However he said it was a sleepover... when his father had no idea. But the mansion is so big Clay decided he may not even realise his friends stayed over.

The only difficult part about organising the sleepover was convincing George. He's still not fully convinced, but brought his stuff just in case.

"I don't have an indoor pool. I have an outdoor one. I do have a cinema room though." Clay said, and Nick's jaw dropped, immediately asking what it was like, and if he could play mario kart on the big screen.

George was a nervous wreck. He's been to the mansion before of course, many a time. But no one else can know that. But he was most anxious for the sleepover part. He's fairly convinced he won't stay over, due to his sleeping issues and the chance there is an alert. But he was mostly shocked his mother let him go. Realistically, he wasn't really grounded anymore.

Nick and George followed Clay to the car, a long vehicle with a bench along the insides for seats. It had LED lights and the windows were tinted. It was definitely something special for Nick and George, but nothing unusual for Clay.

There was a young girl already sitting inside the vehicle, scrolling on her phone. She looked up when she heard the three male seniors enter, and her eyes went wide.

"Um. Hi?" She said, looking between the two boys and Clay, as they all took their seats. Clay sat beside his sister but his friends sat opposite them.

"Drista, these are my friends George and Nick. Guys, this is my sister Drista." He said. George gave a small wave and Nick gave a wide smile. Drista gave an awkward wave back, glancing back at her brother as the car started to move.

"Does father know?"

"Yes, he said I could have them over." He said. She looked shocked.

"Just like that?"

"Well, he had one condition." Clay said nervously, looking at his two friends. "He wants to talk to you guys when we arrive." He said.

Nick's jaw dropped and George's eyes went wide.

"You didn't tell us that!" Nick said.

"Look, it's not a big deal. He just wants to make sure you are going to like, assassinate him or anything."

"A warning would have been nice to meet the fricking Mayor!" Nick said. George was pale.

"It'll be fine." Clay waved.

"Sure." Drista snorted, looking at her phone again.

"Shut up, Drista. It'll be fine, guys. Just be yourselves." He said.

"That's not good advice, Clay." Drista sang.

"I agree with her." George muttered, regretting this whole ordeal even more.

•

What they weren't expecting was the security precautions as they entered the mansion. Nick and George both had to show their bags to a guard. George was surprised at this, since he never had to while being GNotFound. But he never really carried a bag anyways.

"Are these your two friends?" A female voice asked as the four teenagers walked through the foyer.

"Yep. This is George and Nick. Guys, this is Tracy. My father's assistant." Clay said, gesturing before putting his hands in his pockets.

"It's nice to meet you." George said, recognising her. Nick just smiled and decided it was better he didn't speak to adults.

"Your father is in his office, if you want to take the two guests there." She said, looking back at Clay, who nodded. She then turned to Drista. "You have tutoring in half an hour." She said, holding out her hand. Drista groaned, giving the assistant her phone, grumbling under her breath before walking away.

"She's not allowed her phone until after tutoring." Clay explained, as he took George and Nick with him up some stairs.

"So what is the mayor going to ask us? What do we say?" George asked. Clay turned back around to look at them.

"I don't know. Probably what the project is." Clay said, as they began to walk again.

"So nothing else important?" George asked, turning down the hallway he knew was the way to the mayor office, before Clay had even turned. He realised instantly what he had done, but prayed Clay hadn't noticed he knew the way.

"Um. Nah." Clay shrugged, as they neared the room. George took a deep breath.

"Oh. Actually. Don't mention it's a sleepover." Clay said, knocking on the door. George and Nick's eyes went wide.

"What!" George whispered as the door opened, and Clay entered. George and Nick looked at each other before following.

The mayor was at his desk, but was watching as the boys all came in.

"Hi, father." Clay said, and George immediately noticed his change in behaviour. His back was straighter, and his voice was more formal, if not slightly wobbly with nerves. And he seemed more tense in his father's presence.

"Could you introduce us, Clay?" His father asked, standing up, looking down at the two new teenagers. Clay cleared his throat.

"This is Nick, and George, who you met at school." Clay said. Nick stepped forward with his hand out.

"Nice to meet you Mr Mayor." He said, and the Mayor cautiously shook the young man's hand. George also stepped forward, holding out his hand too in politeness. The mayor looked to him, and shook his hand too.

"Nice to see you again, sir." He said, pulling away and stepping back slightly with Nick.

"So you boys are here to work on a... finance assignment?"

"Biology." Clay corrected, and his father nodded.

"Ok. What is it about?" He asked. Clay and Nick both turned to George, who knew the most about the project. He had to stop himself from rolling his eyes at his friends before answering.

"It was a lab assignment. We had to measure the growth of an organism over a five-day period to assess if there was a change in growth rate with an increase in glucose. We just have to write up the reports now, but since we had the same hypothesis and results, it'll be easier to work on together." George said. The mayor looked at him curiously as he spoke.

"And how long will it take?" He asked.

"Not too long. Maybe a few hours." George replied with a shrug.

"How has Clay been doing in class?" The mayor asked, and the question instantly stumped George. The brunette turned to look at Clay who looked slightly scared.

"Oh. Um. He's been doing good, really helped with the assignment." George said, unsure of where this was going.

"Even with him sometimes missing class?"

"I mean, he hasn't missed that much. Clay's a good student." George said, staring back at the mayor with the same intensity.

"And what about the two of you? Good students?" He asked, still staring at George. George could see Clay fidgeting out of the corner of his eye.

"I'd say we are pretty good. We all work together well and Nick has also been a big help." George said.

"What are your grades like?" The mayor asked George. George was ready to answer, like he always did, but Clay interrupted.

"Father." Clay said, and his father turned to him, but Clay didn't continue his sentence.

"I apologise. Anyways. You three go do your project. It was nice meeting you, Nick. And good to see you again... George." The mayor said, sitting back down.

The three left the room, and all instantly relaxed when the door closed behind them.

"I'm so sorry guys, I didn't know he would ask those questions." Clay said, nervously scratching the back of his neck.

"It's fine." George assured him, since he was already half-expecting the Mayor to ask something like that.

Nick and George followed Clay to his room, and George was thankful he actually didn't know the way this time. He's never been to Clay's room.

"Holy shit." Nick said immediately when Clay opened the door. George's jaw dropped too as they entered. George and Nick looked around the room in awe.

"It's massive. You have a couch and Tv?" Nick said, walking over to the flatscreen.

"The windows are amazing. You can practically see the whole city from here." George said, walking to the other side of the room to look through the glass.

"You can play guitar?" Nick asked, walking over to an acoustic guitar sitting on a stand. George looked over.

"Don't put your sticky fingers on it, Nick." George warned his friend, but Clay just laughed, walking over and picking it up.

"Yeah, I can." He said, sitting on the edge of the couch and pulling the strap around his neck. Then he started lightly strumming, his fingers naturally plucking on the strings and playing a soft, unfamiliar tune. It was calming hearing the melody, and George could even see Clay relaxing, his shoulders growing less tense and a small, natural smile forming on his face.

He stopped and put the guitar back down, looking slightly nervous as he looked at his friends.

"You're really good." George said, in awe. Clay smiled slightly awkwardly, not used to being complimented.

"Thanks."

"Holy fuck." Nick then stated, walking towards something on the other side of the room. George's jaw dropped as well and he ran over to Clay's desk.

His setup was incredible. He had three monitors, an LED keyboard and two entire PCs.

"Clay!" Nick exclaimed, trailing his hand over the black and green gaming chair. George just stared at the three monitors. Clay came over, his hands in his pockets.

"I'm a little passionate about gaming." He chuckled.

"You have all this to play minecraft?" Nick asked, his hands now trailing over the keyboard like it was a delicate piece of art.

"Sort of."

"This is incredible. I've always wanted a PC but my parents haven't let me get my own. I have to use my laptop with its obnoxious fan." George said.

"That explains why you're so bad." Nick snickered and George hit him. "I have a PC at home but I brought my laptop to play."

"Why do you have two entire coms and three monitors?" George asked Clay, who's cheeks went slightly pink.

"I, um, I've kind of thought about making youtube videos, or streaming. I haven't yet, but if I want to I could." Clay said.

"Woah that's actually epic." George said.

"Can we play minecraft now?" Nick interrupted, jumping up and down with excitement.

"What? Nick, we have to work on the assignment." George said, and Nick groaned.

"I thought that was our cover story." He whined. Clay laughed, patting Nick on the shoulder.

"We can play later, we have all night. Let's get these assignments out of the way."

So that's how the three of them ended up sprawled in different areas of Clay's room. Clay was sitting on the couch, George was sitting on the ground, his laptop on the coffee table, and Nick had made himself comfortable on his stomach on the floor.

"I still don't understand why they all just died." Nick groaned. George sighed.

"For the fiftieth time, the yeast reached carrying capacity. The environment they were in could no longer sustain the number of organisms." George said.

"I don't know how to write that."

"I'm not writing it for you. Where are you up to?"

"The Hypothesis section." Nick grumbled. George snapped his neck to stare at Nick, noticing Clay completely lying down on the couch now, the laptop on his knees while he stared at the ceiling, playing with the fidget cube.

"That's at the start! We've been here for three hours and you've only done the introduction and aim? Nick!"

"Wait I'm supposed to have done the aim?" He said. George facepalmed.

"The assignment is 2k words." George said.

"I work better under pressure. This will be successfully done the night before it's due." Nick said, rolling over onto his back. George shook his head.

"What about you, Clay?"

"I've done everything up to the limitations and conclusion. But I don't think I can do anymore to be honest. I'm surprised I've done that much in this time."

"That's really good, I agree I am also dead." George said, staring back at his word document.

"Gogy can I read through yours?" Nick said.

"No, you'll copy."

"I won't, I swear." Nick said. George narrowed his eyes. "Can I at least read your aim?"

"Fine, since we have the same aim. But you'll have to reword it." George said, picking up his laptop and taking it over to Nick.

As Nick read through it, his eyebrows furrowed.

"I don't understand what it says."

George took his laptop back and read through the aim, also filling with confusion as he read it.

"I wrote this a week ago, at 3 in the morning." George mumbled, quickly deleting it and rewording it so it made more sense.

"3 in the morning!" Clay exclaimed and George nodded.

"Prime time."

Before Clay could point out that it was a horrible time to do study, there was a knock on the door, and he immediately jumped up.

"Come in." He called, and relax when he saw it was Tracy.

"When will your guests leave? Are they staying for dinner?" She asked.

"Actually, they're leaving now. I'll take them downstairs, and then I'll go get dinner myself, I have a test to study for so I won't be at the table." Clay said. Tracy nodded.

"Ok, and they will have to be searched on their way out." She said, and Clay nodded. When she left, Clay facepalmed.

"Wait so we aren't sleeping over?" Nick asked. George was secretly celebrating.

"You are. I'll be right back, gotta go bribe the guards again." He said, stretching and grabbing his wallet. George got up and stopped him.

"Woah, no. It's fine, we can go now. No need to bribe anyone." George said with a nervous chuckle.

"It's fine. They easily accept if it's from me. We haven't even played minecraft yet." Clay said.

"Just let the man bribe the guards. I want to sleepover." Nick said from the floor. George shot him a look.

"Clay, no. This will just get you in trouble with your father."

"I can handle him."

"It's not worth it."

"But I haven't had a sleepover since I was nine." Clay frowned. "I swear he won't find out. Surely you stay." He said. George shook his head.

"I can't stay, my sleep-"

"You brought your pills right?" Clay asked. George slowly nodded. "Your sleep isn't an issue." Clay said.

"But your father-"

"I don't want to listen to him for once." Clay said.

"Clay..."

"Please Georgie." Clay said softly, with big, blinking eyes. It was like George was being put under a spell, with those eyes.

"Ok." George said even quieter, and couldn't help but smile too when Clay cheered and pulled Nick to his feet, the two of them dancing around in excitement. George rolled his eyes at his friends' playfulness, his heart blooming with happiness at the reminder that they want him here. That they genuinely enjoy his company.

"I'll be right back." Clay said, jogging to the door and leaving. As soon as he left, George let out a sigh and sat down on the couch, a hand covering his eyes. Nick sat beside him and put a hand on his shoulder.

"You alright?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"A lot of things. But right now it's the issue that I'm sleeping over at Clay's house, who I am still helplessly in love with." George said, removing his hand from his eyes and staring at Nick.

"You seem better around him now. No more weird stuttering."

"I still do sometimes. And it's because he's more normal now, less of a idealised fantasy. But still perfect." George said, wincing at his own words.

"Well how were things with Xavier? You never told me what happened."

"I asked him if it was a date, he said it could be, continuing on to say he would love to go on a date with me." George said. Nick grinned.

"No way. What did you say?"

"I said no, I like someone else." George said and Nick's face fell.

"Do you like Xavier?"

"I mean yeah, he's great."

"Do you have feelings for him?"

"Not the same as Clay, but I do like him, he made me blush and was so sweet when we got icecream."

"What did he say when you rejected him."

"He was disgustingly ok with it, saying he didn't mind, he understood, and he would be here if I finally grew feelings for him. The problem is I have no idea what feelings even are anymore." George said. Nick hummed.

"Do you think you'd have a shot with Clay?" Nick asked. George sighed and shook his head.

"I know I don't. He's obsessed with this one person, doesn't see me as more than a friend, and I'm pretty sure he is not gay. My chances are very slim. But my heart doesn't listen to my brain."

"I don't want to crush your soul, and you know I love you very much, and I support you always. But I think maybe you're right about Clay. He really seems hung up over his crush. So maybe you should consider other options. Xavier seems to really care, and he seems nice enough to treat you right. And you like the guy. I think maybe you should try something knew." Nick said.

George sighed, leaning back against the couch cushion.

"I told Xavier I didn't want to lead him on. I didn't want to date him if I was still into someone else. It's not fair to him. I can't just get rid of my feelings for Clay. If it was that easy, I would switched it off long ago."

"Whatever you do, I'll be here to bully you for it." Nick said, and George scoffed, rolling his eyes.

"Thanks Nick." George said, knowing that was Nick's way of saying he would support him.

"While we are talking about crushes..." Nick started to say, but was interrupted by the door opening again.

"Alright. Bribery done, not even that expensive this time." Clay entered the room, throwing his wallet back onto the desk.

"Minecraft!" Nick yelled, getting up and running to his bag to grab his mouse. George sighed and sat back down at the coffee table, booting up minecraft, as Clay also did on his PC.

The three played minecraft for a few hours. Clay was in the nether for most of it, and Nick was grinding for diamonds. George however was determined to tame every animal, after discovering you could.

But as time went on, George felt more and more anxious about the sleeping part. He was constantly on edge, almost expecting an alert to come through. But nothing had come yet. Clay had left at one point and brought back pizza, enough for the three of them. He somehow manage to sneak it.

"Where are we sleeping?" Nick asked Clay, who froze.

"That... is an excellent question. One of you can get the couch and I'll go grab a mattress from another room." He said, dusting off his fingers and went to leave.

"Won't someone notice if you take a mattress?" George asked.



"No one notices anything in this house." Clay waved off and left the room.

He returned dragging a mattress with Drista, who was whispering at him harshly.

"You are an absolute idiot, Clay. You are going to get them in trouble too." She said, as soon as the door closed behind them and they dropped the mattress onto the floor, with a pillow and sheets.

"It'll be fine, now go." He said. Drista scoffed, and left.

"Is she right though? Like what would happen if the mayor finds out?" Nick asked.

"Um. It doesn't matter. I never have sleepovers. It's just a one-off." Clay said, but George noticed how tense he seemed. George stood up.

"Are you sure you don't want us to go?"

"Yes. Stay. Please. It'll be fun!" Clay said with a grin, shaking away his nerves.

"We can share secrets!" Nick said.

Clay and George both chuckled slightly awkwardly at that comment.

George ended up on the mattress, Clay in his bed and Nick happily on the couch. The entire time George's stomach was filled with nerves, especially as they each took turns in the ensuite getting dressed and ready for bed.

George glanced at his bag, where the pill bottle was. He obviously hasn't been taking any and he wouldn't tonight, but the guilt of not taking them is making him feel ill.

"You alright George?" Clay asked, sitting next to the brunette on the couch while it was Nick's turn in the bathroom.

"Um, yeah I'm fine." George said with a shrug.

"Is about your pills?" He asked. George stared at him. How did he know? "If it helps, I could get you something to eat with them if you want?"

"No, no. I'm fine. Oh, Nick's done." George said, grabbing his stuff and the bottle and going into the ensuite and locking it. The bathroom was bigger than his actual room at home, but he didn't really care. He was more stressed about sleeping over at his crush's house.

There was so much that could go wrong tonight, including the Mayor finding out. George just sighed and got dressed into his pyjamas, not giving the bottle a second glance, before he exited and went back into the room.

Nick was already knocked out on the couch, and Clay was stifling laughter. He turned to George, pointing at Nick with a silent laugh on his face.

"He's out already." Clay said, a hint of a wheeze in the silence that made George smile too. Clay shook his head and went over to his bed.

"Night George." He said, plugging his phone in beside his bed and turning up the volume like he normally does, just in case. George didn't notice that small habit though.

"Thanks again for having us over, Clay." George said, moving the sheets and getting under the covers of the mattress on the floor, turning his head to look at the blonde boy in the bed who sent

him a smile.

"Of course. I'm glad you decided to stay, I know how anxious sleepovers must make you feel, with your insomnia." He said. George cringed slightly but nodded.

"Thanks. Night Clay." George said, and Clay switched off the lamp.

And once again, George was plunged into a torturous darkness full of whispers and proddings, wickedly denying him the relief of rest. All he could do was stare into the void above, willing his busy mind to go mute for a minute, just a minutes slumber.

But alas, he was stuck. Stuck in the repetitive limbo that was his own form of hell. Hours and hours of nothing but thoughts and a dangerous habit of checking his phone.

George sat up in bed. It was still dark, still quiet and still no rest for his brain, just his tired eyelids. He's never slept well at other people's houses. That was if his body even granted him sleep.

He doesn't even know how long it's been. The nights are always long and drawn out, flicking between hazes of consciousness, resting eyes, and barely reaching REM sleep. Before his body can even dare to delve deeper than dreams, he wakes up. But tonight, he can't even hope to dream.

George went to the ensuite to splash water on his face. This was a mistake. He could be at home right now. Sure, he wouldn't get that much more sleep, but he could at least be productive. Maybe scroll on his phone out loud, maybe go get some snacks from the kitchen, maybe read news stories on villains, possibly work on the many projects he has.

But no, he was at Clay's house, forced to feign sleep.

He took a deep breath before walking back into the room, about to lie back down on his mattress. But he could hear a sound that made him stop. It sounded like soft crying, sniffing coming from Clay's bed. George squinted, and could just barely see Clay's face illuminated by a light out of the window, illuminating his tears as the boy twisted and turned in his sleep.

A nightmare.

George instinctively walked closer to Clay, reaching his bed. Clay was whining, his sobs growing louder.

"No. Behind you." George heard him murmur.

"Clay." George whispered, like that would do anything. Clay just jerked in the bed, one of his hands balling into a fist, his fingernails digging into his palm.

"No, no no. Please don't hurt him. Please." Clay sobbed. George reached forward, a hand touching Clay's balled fist.

"Clay." He said a bit louder, trying to pry his clenched fingers open so he would stop digging into his palm. Clay squeezed tighter though.

"Clay!" George said, another hand moving to Clay's shoulder to shake him. The shake made the blonde's eyes snap open, and he sat up suddenly, gasping for air, his eyes searching the room before landing on George and immediately flinching and covering his face.

"Clay, it's just me. It's George." He said, putting both his hands over Clay's still clenched fist. Clay removed his hand from his face and stared at George who gave him a small smile.

"It was a nightmare. You're ok." He said. Clay nodded, his shoulders shaking slightly. George finally got his hand to unclench, and dark red crescent shapes were burned into the palm. George frowned, running his thumb over the marks. As the moonlight hit Clay's hand, George could see some slightly lighter crescent marks, right next to the fresh ones.

"I-I'm sorry." Clay said. George looked back up at his face, as he wiped his tears with his free hand.

"Don't be sorry." George said, his thumb still running circles on Clay's palm, soothing the marks and calming Clay down, despite neither of them even noticing the small act.

Clay sat up properly, crossing his legs and leaning against the headboard. He glanced at George, and then at their hands, moving his arm and grabbing George's wrist instead, gently pulling him into the bed as well, making his friend sit beside him.

George wasn't expecting the gesture, and a deep blush ran up his neck to his cheeks, but he sat beside Clay, also crossing his legs and leaning against the headboard.

They both sat in silence for several minutes, George hyper aware of their now intertwined hands, but Clay wasn't focusing on it too much. The blonde was still trying to calm down from the nightmare, not letting himself go into a panic.

"What's the time?" Clay finally asked, his voice slightly hoarse.

"I don't know." George replied quietly. Clay reached over to check his phone.

"2:30." Clay sighed, sitting back up straight. George nodded, not wanting to speak. He just wanted to exist in this moment with Clay forever.

"Why are you awake?" Clay asked after another minute, not needing to even look at George. It was dark anyways. George bit his lip.

"You were having a nightmare."

"But how did I wake you? Aren't your pills supposed to keep you asleep through the night?" Clay asked.

George didn't reply. He had no excuse. He was staring ahead into the darkness of the room, some of it lit up with dancing street lamps through the windows. George liked the way the guitar strings reflected in the moon light.

Clay turned to look at George, and George could see him out of the corner of his eye.

"You didn't take them." Clay said slowly. George hesitated for a moment, but then nodded, avoiding looking at Clay, not wanting to see the way the light lit up his bright eyes even in the shadows.

"Why not?" Clay asked. George shrugged, looking at the blanket and fiddling with it.

"I don't need them." George decided.

"There's nothing wrong with-"

"I know, but I don't need them. My sleep isn't as bad as they exaggerate. I just hate the thought of not being to wake up. What if there's a fire in my room?"

"I'm sure your body would wake you up."

"Not necessarily, it's literally a drug. I'm just stressed, that's why my body doesn't sleep. It'll fix itself soon, after my major projects are done." George said.

"It wouldn't hurt to-"

"It's my decision Clay." George said with finality in his voice. Clay was still looking at him.

"So you haven't had them at all? You've lied to your parents?"

"I had half that one time. It wasn't great. Please don't tell my parents, Clay. I don't want to burden them with more issues."

"They are looking out for you and your health." Clay frowned.

"I don't want to disappoint them more." George said.

"George-"

"Clay." George said, finally turning to meet his gaze. They were closer than George anticipated, but his slight irritability was preventing his brain from freaking out. "I can take care of myself. You don't need to check on me for bullies, and you don't need to make me swallow pills like a kid. I know what I'm doing. I'm not helpless. I'm not an idiot." George said.

Clay didn't know what to say. He didn't want to upset him more.

"Ok." Clay said, and George's shoulders relaxed. "You know where I'm coming from is a place of care, right? I'm just looking out for you. So is everyone else. It's not to spite you."

"I know. I'm sorry. I know you're just looking out for me. But I can take care of myself, ok?" George said.

"Ok. I know you can." Clay said with a smile, and George gave a half-hearted one back.

The brunette glanced down at their still intertwined hands and started pulling away.

"I'll let you get some sleep."

"But *you* aren't going to sleep, are you?" Clay asked, grabbing George's hand tighter before he could slip out.

"Well, I'll try. But I'm not going to keep you awake."

"I just had a nightmare, I can never sleep after them. Why don't we just both stay up?"

"And do what?" George asked. Clay shrugged.

"We can just talk." He said. George hummed. He didn't want to talk. Didn't want to get to know Clay more. Didn't want to fall even deeper into the pit of love when he's desperate to crawl out.

"Talk about what?"

"Anything. Like... have you always lived here?" Clay asked.

"No, I lived in England when I was really little, hence the accent. I came here in elementary."

"Your whole family is British, right? Why did you want to come to America?"

"Yeah, we are. I don't know why. But this city in particular I've noticed is quite split in half between British and American." George said.

"Yeah, there are actually a lot of British people. It's great though, I love the accent."

"Really?" George asked. Clay nodded with a smile.

"Yeah. It's so pretty in comparison to American accents."

There was a sudden loud band sound coming from the room, and both boys immediately turned to see Nick, who was previously on the couch, was now lying on the floor, still fast asleep. Immediately, George had to cover his mouth to stifle his laughter, and Clay had to bite his finger, but both were in near hysterics at the sight.

"H-how?" Clay wheezed. George almost laughed more at his laugh.

"How does your laugh *do* that." George giggled, trying to calm down.

"What? The wheeze? I don't know." Clay said, taking a deep breath to calm down. "I don't like my laugh."

"What? What do you mean?" George said, a frown now on his face.

"The wheeze. I try to hide it when I laugh, cause it's dumb and stupid." He said, shaking his head.

"But it's your laugh. So your normal laugh isn't really your true laugh?" George asked, recalling Clay's laugh he normally here's.

"I mean, it is, but less wheezy. I don't know, I've been told it's dumb so I've tried to not let the stupid wheeze out." Clay said.

George was reminded of *Dream's* laugh, the green man was always wheezing or coughing up a lung, with no care in the world for how ridiculous it sounded at times.

"I have a friend who wheezes a *lot*. Granted, he's kind of insane, but I love it."

"You like the wheeze laugh?" Clay asked. George nodded. "I only let it out around one person."

"Who?"

"The person I like. I don't know, I can't help it, it comes out unintentionally." Clay said.

George's shoulders immediately dropped slightly, his heart sinking.

"Oh. You must be really comfortable about her then."

"Yeah, I guess. I don't know, I can't help it." Clay said. George was silent, unsure of how to continue the conversation now.

He wanted to learn more about Clay's crush. What she's like, and why he likes her. What's different about her from George apart from sex chromosomes.

"What's your biggest fear?" Clay suddenly asked. George was taken aback.

"I did not expect us to get that deep." George laughed. Clay shrugged.

"I'm just curious." He said. George hummed in thought.

"I guess the generic ones. My family and friends dying. But I also... ok, this is embarrassing." George put a hand over his eyes as he cringed at himself. "I can't swim."

"What? You can't swim?" Clay asked. George shook his head and lower his hand.

"I didn't do lessons in England and when we moved here, my parents just sort of forgot? I mean, Lexi is a swimmer now, on a squad. But I was too old to start basic swimming lessons when she did and I was embarrassed. So, yeah. I don't know. I've tried once, but almost drowned. So I guess it kind of scares me. Drowning, you know?"

"Not being able to breathe?" Clay asked. George nodded. "That sort of explains how your panic attacks gets worse when you feel like you can't breathe." He said.

"Maybe. I've never really thought about it too much." George said. "What about you? What's your biggest fear?"

"Um. I guess the same, my friends or my sister getting hurt." He said. George noticed how he didn't mention his father in that group. "My father kind of scares me at times but it's not like he's the worst thing in the world."

"You shouldn't be scared of your dad." George said with a frown.

"Well, I mean, I'm not *scared* of him. I mean, he can be loud when he's angry but he's not like actually scary. It sounded bad when I sad that. He's not as bad as he seems..."

"It's ok, Clay. I'm sure he's a good father, you don't have to explain yourself." George said.

"Yeah..." He trailed off. They fell into a silence once again.

George was brought out of his own thoughts several minutes later by a slight weight on his shoulder. He glanced down to see Clay leaning against him, eyes closed.

*I thought he said he can't sleep after nightmares.*

George sighed, and shifted in the bed to get Clay to lie down more, so he could get out and return to his mattress.

But Clay groaned and squeezed his hand tighter.

"Stay." He mumbled. George was bright red and frozen. The man was delusional.

"I can go back to my bed-"

Clay cut him off by letting go of George's hand, instead wrapping an arm around the smaller boy's waist and pulling him down so he was lying horizontally next to Clay. George's breath hitched and he could feel his heart racing.

Clay's face was beside George's neck, and his light breathing was tickling him, making his hairs stand on end.

"Stay with me G..." Clay whispered ever so softly, that George could barely pick up on what he said, too focused on the air brushing against his neck.

*Stay with me? Why does he want me to stay? He knows I'm gay right, how is he comfortable with this? He's tired and delusional. Is this taking advantage of him?*

George was overthinking everything, not being able to relax at all. Clays arm was still sprawled around George's stomach, rising and falling with George's shallow breathing.

So not only was George stuck in his personal hell of sleepless nights, but now was in the hold of his crush, not helping his racing mind.

But what would be shocking to most, especially George, was how his eyes grew heavier, and his breathing grew deeper, and his shoulders relaxed, his head gently falling to the side to rest against the blonde.

Clay and George's breathing synced up, as sleep took them both.

## Chapter End Notes

You'll never believe I wrote the entire sleep deprivation bit at 4am one night after drinking

Kinda impressive, not gonna lie

# You remind me of a friend

## Chapter Summary

Clay gets invited to laser tag. And George notices some similarities between him and Dream.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When George woke up, he felt warm, and calm. He felt safe and happy. He melted more into the touch of being held, his mind not thinking straight.

He actually got some sleep. Well, only three hours of very restless, in and out of consciousness. But when George finally woke properly, knowingly not returning to sleep, he hadn't even registered the fact he had gotten a decent amount of sleep. Nor did his mind register he wasn't in his own bed.

George smiled slightly, surrounded by warmth, leaning into the touch.

Until the warmth *moved*.

George's eyes snapped open, and he realised he was being hugged while he slept, pulled flush against Clay, his head against his chest and Clay's chin above his head. Clay had an arm around George, who also had an arm wrapped around Clay's torso.

George was mortified, and immediately started moving away carefully, with ever so slight movements to not wake the sleeping boy.

Clay grumbled slightly as George wiggled out of his grip, but the taller boy just rolled over onto his stomach, and George himself stood up, hands out in front as he doubled checked Clay was still asleep.

George sighed in relief when Clay didn't wake, and he quickly made his way back to his bed, grabbing his phone and immediately checking for notifications.

No alert, of course. Thank God he didn't miss anything.

Why hasn't the Mayor summoned them yet? They haven't had a proper meeting since before the stolen safe incident. There is so much to be yelled at for, including the interview and bringing a villain to the mansion.

It was 5:30 in the morning, and beginning to grow lighter outside. George knew he wasn't going to go back to sleep, he was somehow lucky enough to get 3 hours, even if it wasn't consistent.

So he opened his laptop and booted up minecraft, going to his own survival world that he's been practising on. He's been getting much better at the game, and actually killed a zombie the other day.

So he played minecraft by himself for a few hours until eventually, Clay woke up. The blonde sat



up and rubbed his face with a yawn, reaching over for his phone. He looked over to see George focused on his laptop, sticking his tongue out in concentration. It made Clay laugh, and George looked up.

"What are you doing?" Clay asked. George felt his heart flutter at his voice, it was raspy and deep. Clay's morning voice was something to die for. His messy hair was sticking up in every which way.

George spun the laptop around to show him the screen, and Clay shook his head.

"Minecraft?" He laughed as George rotated the screen back to himself. "How long have you been playing? When did you go back to your bed? Did you get much sleep?" Clay then bombarded him with questions, swinging his legs over the side of his bed and running his hands through his hair to tame it.

"Um. I've been playing since I woke up." George said.

"When did you wake up?"

"5:30." George said, and Clay checked his phone.

"You've been playing for 3 hours?" He asked, and George slowly nodded. "Wait. So did you get some sleep?" Clay then asked with hope. George shrugged.

"Yeah. I actually did get a few hours. I mean, it wasn't deep sleep and I was sort of in and out of consciousness but it was more than usual." George said. Clay's smile grew.

"Really?" He asked, and George nodded. "That's great. I'm surprised I fell back asleep too. Normally I never can after nightmares." Clay stood up, and stretched. His shirt rode up slightly as he raised his arms, and George immediately looked back down, his face blushing deeply.

"I'm going to have a shower." He said, and walked into the ensuite. George turned off minecraft and walked over to Nick, who was still on the floor, asleep.

"Nick." George said, poking him with his foot. Nick groaned. "Get up. You're the last one still asleep." He said, poking him again. Nick stuck his hand out and grabbed George's foot, and tried tugging him to the ground.

"Get off!" George shouted, trying to pull his foot away. Nick tugged on it again, almost making George lose his balance.

"No. You woke me up you bitch." Nick said, blindly reaching for George's other foot, but George had managed to pull away and took many steps back.

"Get up. Clay's in the shower." George said. Nick yawned and sat up, wincing as he moved his neck.

"How the fuck did I end up on the floor?" He asked.

"Actually, it was really funny. Me and Clay heard a bang in the night and we looked to see you had fallen off." George laughed. Nick just groggily grabbed his phone and flipped George off. Neither of them noticing what George just admitted, that he was awake during the night.

"Karl asked for a lift. I didn't drive, so he's gonna have to find another way. I feel bad." Nick said, typing a response.

"A lift? To where?" George asked. Nick looked up and gave George a look.

"Did you forget?"

"Oh no." George muttered, it happened again.

"We have laser tag at 10 with the gang." Nick said and George nodded, face palming.

"Right." He groaned.

"It'll be fun. In fact, the laser tag place isn't too far from here. We can walk." Nick said, stretching and getting up from the floor so he was sitting on the couch.

"I don't wanna walk." George whined.

"Walk where?" Clay asked, and George spun around to see him walk into the room, dressed in casual pants and a black shirt. A towel was around his neck still, his damp hair sticking to his head. George lost his breath.

"To laser tag. Our friends organised we all go out." Nick said, standing up and cracking his back.

"Oh. Cool. What time?" Clay asked, shaking the towel through his hair to dry it. George was staring, so he looked away, at the ground.

"10. Do you want to come?" Nick asked. Clay stopped and looked up.

"Really?"

"Of course. Everyone knows you, and Karl is coming. George wants you to come too, right George?" Nick said, and George nodded, still not looking at Clay.

"I'd love to come. I've never been to laser tag before." Clay said.

"Well, you're in for a treat. But good luck beating me. I'm a pro." Nick said. George laughed, shaking his head and looking at Nick.

"I destroy you every time."

"Cause you get lucky!"

"I may suck at bowling, but I'm the best at laser tag."

"Whatever. Clay is it ok if I have a shower?" Nick asked. Clay nodded, and was about to go get a towel for his friend, but there was a knock on his door, and all three teenagers froze.

"Who is it?" Clay called, immediately gesturing for George and Nick to hide.

George was the only smart one, running to the mattress that was still in the middle of the room, and dragging it to the other side of the door. If someone poked their head in, they won't see it. And then George ran with Nick into the ensuite.

"It's Tracy."

George and Nick had their ears to the door.

"Um. What do you need?" They heard Clay said, and then the click of the door.

"Breakfast is ready when you want it. Also your father says not to disturb him at all today until you're summoned." Tracy said.

"I wouldn't disturb him anyway. And summoned for what?"

"A meeting. He wants you there."

"What meeting and why the hell would he want me there?"

"It'll be later. He wants you to see what his job is like and, quote, what he has to deal with."

"What? I don't care about his stupid job." Clay said. George and Nick looked at each other. They felt like they shouldn't be listening.

"You must be there." She said.

"Whatever. What time?"

"11. Do not be late." She said, and the door closed. George and Nick waited just in case she was still there, but the ensuite door opened and they almost toppled out.

"Sorry about that guys." Clay said sheepishly, rubbing the back of his neck.

"That's ok. Can you still come laser tag or is it too close to your meeting?" Nick asked, not bothering to hide the fact he was eavesdropping.

"I mean... I'm technically not allowed to go laser tag anyways. But I can go for one game and come back in time. Do you think that's enough time?" Clay said.

"Yeah, A game isn't that long. Like twenty minutes."

"So you're sneaking out?" George asked, worried.

"Well, it's not like it's the first time I've snuck out." Clay chuckled.

The boys had a plan to sneak out of the mansion. They had to go past the guards, that was the arrangement Clay had organised last night, since their bags still have to be checked. But they had to get to the exit without being seen by Tracy. Or anyone else important.

So once all three boys had gotten dressed and ready, they started making their way through the mansion. Clay went ahead, and after a few seconds, would beckon the other two to follow.

Until they rounded a corner and were startled by Drista, who also jumped in shock.

"Clay!" Drista whisper-shouted. Clay put a finger to his lips.

"Shush. I'm going out." He whispered back.

"Why? You already snuck them in! Why are you sneaking out with them!"

"Because I can."

"Father is going to be even more mad." Drista said with a frown.

"He's not going to find out."

"What if he does? Don't you remember how mad he was the other day! Look at your head!" She

said, gesturing to his forehead. Clay's eyes went wide, and he grabbed her arm, tugging her away from George and Nick.

George's jaw dropped as he put two and two together.

"What did she mean?" Nick asked. George stared at Clay, who was clearly really mad, seething words at his sister who shoved him and then walked away. Clay had his fists clenched, but he shook out his arms and then turned back to his friends nervously.

"Sorry about her." He said.

"What did she mean, Clay." George said, scared for the reply.

"When father saw I hurt my head, he got angry at me because he had to get someone to drive me." Clay said. George furrowed his eyebrows. "Oh! You thought- no! No it wasn't his *fault*. Drista worded it weird. She was just justifying the fact how on edge he is that he got mad at my injury. But he doesn't- don't worry." Clay said in a rush with laughter.

George wasn't sure what to believe, but he nodded.

They continued the walk through the house, and eventually made it to the exit, where their bags were checked.

Once they fully left the mansion, Clay cheered and punched the air, making George and Nick laugh.

"That was exhilarating. And way more complicated than how I usually sneak out." He said.

"How do you normally sneak out?"

"Oh. Um. A window." Clay laughed.

The difference in moods was almost comical as the group walked the few blocks to laser tag. Clay was chipper, almost a skip to his step as he walked on the right side of Nick. He had a grin on his face as he talked away, the adrenaline from sneaking out as his civilian self was addicting.

Nick, for a first, was the most subdued. Still half-asleep and now regretting the decision to walk, he just listened to Clay talk and tried to stifle his yawns. For getting the most sleep out of the three, he somehow hadn't woken up yet.

George was George. He was patiently listening to Clay, but his mind was busy overthinking the last few hours, as well as the increase in anxiousness the longer he goes without an alert. Everytime there's a longer break between alerts, something bad always happens. This was building up, and he had no clue what for.

Since walking was not the most efficient method, the trio were the second last of the group to arrive, seeing almost everyone already waiting outside the venue. Skeppy, Darryl, Quackity, and Karl.

"Hey guys!" Darryl called, waving them over. "Hi Clay! I didn't realise you were coming." He said with a smile.

"Oh. Um. It's alright if I join right?" Clay asked nervously.

"It's perfect, now we have even numbers for duos so no one is alone." Skeppy said.

"Where are the children?" George asked. Quackity pointed behind his shoulder at a car pulling up on the other side of the street.

Tommy, Tubbo and Ranboo all jumped out, and the window of the drivers seat rolled down.

"Tommy you take care of your friends ok?" Phil called out. George stared in shock.

"Wait. Phil is Tommy's Dad?" He asked.

"He told us that." Nick laughed. George stared at the man.

"I didn't realise it was that Phil." George replied.

The three sophomores all ran across the road, barely even checking for cars.

"Hey guys!" Tubbo said cheerfully.

"Hey children. Ready to get murdered?" Quackity grinned.

"That was only slightly creepy." Ranboo commented. Tommy put his hands in his pockets.

"Oh shit. PHIL." He called back at the car, and turned to run back over the road, but didn't see the car coming.

Nick put an arm out, abruptly stopping the lanky boy before he could get bulldozed.

"Tommy! What are you doing!" Phil yelled from the car. Tommy pushed Nick away, and checked for cars first before running back over.

"I forgot my phone. And my money." He whined when he reached the window. Nick rolled his eyes.

"That kid's going to get killed." He muttered.

"Tom, you need to be careful." They heard Phil lecture his son. "Who was the boy that stopped you?"

"Sorry Phil. And that's Nick. Can I have some money now please?" Tommy asked. Phil handed him some cash while shaking his head.

"Thank you Nick!" Phil called out. Nick gave him a salute.

"No worries Tommy's Dad." Nick said back. George elbowed him.

"It's *Phil*." He scolded him.

Tommy turned and this time checked for cars before running back over with his phone and cash, a wide grin on his face like a lunatic.

"Now everyone is here we can finally play!" Quackity said, and the massive group went inside.

"We've booked the session already, first is duos, then free-for-all." Darryl said, handing the cards over to them. "Has everyone done laser tag before?" He asked.

Everyone nodded except Clay, who shook his head.

"You haven't? Big man, you're going to die." Tubbo said.

"It's pretty simple. They go through the instructions anyways." Skeppy explained.

"Also, we are the only people in this session! How epic is that. Apparently saturday mornings aren't too busy." Karl said.

"Alright guys, you ready to come on through for the instructions video?" A woman came out from the back with the uniform. Everyone nodded and followed her through to a dark room with a screen. "Ok everyone take seat. This will be a two minute video with the rules." She said, and began the video.

George had seen it already, so had everyone except Clay, so it was mostly just for him. But Clay wasn't really paying attention, more looking around at the space theme around the room. The video was pretty straight-forward anyway. No swearing, no running, no cross-teaming. The rules that usually get broken anyways but the employees don't care too much.

Once the video finished, the lady escorted them into the next room, and got everyone to put on their vests and the attached guns.

As George pulled on the strap to make his tighter, and then scanned his card again the suit to make it light up, he saw Clay struggling with his vest, confused on which way it should go on. George laughed slightly and Clay looked at him with a pout.

"Mind giving me a hand?" He asked. George nodded, clipping his own gun back to his vest, and walking over to Clay, loosening the straps and rotating it so it was facing the right way.

"You just slide it over your head, and then do the buckles." George said, handing it back. Clay followed the simple instructions, and scanned the card against the vest, and smiled when his suit lit up the default white colour.

"Thanks."

"Ok. So first is duos. Everyone get in a pair and I'll give you each a colour." The lady announced, now also holding a gun. Everyone looked at each other.

"I'm with Gogy." Tommy announced, walking over and putting a hand on George's shoulder.

"No, George is good. I'm with George." Quackity said, also coming over.

"How about Clay goes with George, since it's his first time. It'll even it out." Darryl suggested, standing next to Skeppy.

"Good idea." Nick said, with a grin, standing beside Karl.

"You guys put me with a child!" Quackity complained, gesturing to Tommy.

"Suck it up, Q." Tommy said, elbowing him. Tubbo and Ranboo were partnered.

George looked at Clay, who smiled and unhooked his gun.

"Let's destroy them." Clay said, making George laugh and nod.

"Agreed."

The lady went to each group, shooting the vests until the partners were the same colour. Nick and Karl were a magenta colour, Tubbo and Ranboo were red. Quackity and Tommy were green. And Darryl and Skeppy were orange.

"Alright. You guys are going to be yellow." She said, shooting at Clay's vest.

"Actually, could we be blue? George is colourblind and yellow and green look the same. It'll be easier if he tell who I am." Clay said to the woman, gesturing to George

"Sure thing." She said with a smile, shooting until they were a bright blue, doing the same to George who was blushing.

"Thanks Clay. I didn't even think about that." George said, receiving a smile in return.

"No worries, I gotcha." Clay nudged George, who blushed even more.

"Alright gang. If you have your phone on you, can you please leave it in your bag." She said.

George felt his heart drop.

"I have to keep it on me." George said quickly. She turned to him.

"Ok, that's fine. However if anything happens to it, we aren't liable." She said. George nodded, sighing in relief.

"Ok. You all can go, you have twenty seconds before it's starts." She said, opening the doors to the arena.

Everyone immediately rushed in, and split into their pairs. George ran right, hearing Clay behind him. He ran up a ramp, and down towards his favourite area.

There was a massive countdown, with a few seconds to go, and George took a deep breath as he got in the zone. He was good at laser tag. Possibly from his skills as GNotFound. His weapon is a bow, so his aiming has improved.

"Ok." George turned to Clay. "Nick runs around like a maniac, so Karl will probably tag along, but I don't know what his play style is like. Tubbo is sneaky, he likes to run from hiding spot to hiding spot because he's small. Ranboo is tall though, so that might be difficult. Skeppy is a sniper. He hides up high and shoots at anything he sees, barely moving around. He's got good aim though, same with Darryl. They are probbaly our biggest threat. Darryl gets scary when he plays. Quackity and Tommy we have nothing to worry about. They are loud and probably already arguing." George said.

"Alright. So what's our strategy?" Clay asked, smiling as George ran through everything.

The countdown finished, and their suits flashed. George looked around, and then walked further along, towards a sheltered area, Clay following.

"We don't stay in one area too long, but we can't keep moving constantly. We should find Skeppy's hiding spot." George said.

Clay's suit suddenly shut off with a loud noise, and George instinctively lined up his gun and shot at the magenta vest behind Clay, as Clay took cover behind the wall.

Nick was shot in the chest, as his laser just missed George. George could see another coloured vest behind Nick, and shot Karl too.

"Run Nick." George cackled, shooting the dead vest repeatedly. Nick turned and hid behind the wall so he wouldn't get shot immediately as his cooldown finished.

"Come on." George said to Clay, turning and running through the structure. He vaguely heard Clay's vest turn back on from behind, as they found a new spot.

George stopped and looked down below them. He saw a red flash through the structure below, and he aimed his gun, waiting for them to appear again.

The person passed a window and George shot, hitting them.

"Nick's coming again." Clay said, and George turned to see Clay run back a few feet across the gap, and shoot down where they just ran through. George heard a loud swear and assumed Clay shot Nick.

"They are targeting us." George said. "Let's go up again. Skeppy's favourite spot is up here." He said, turning towards a ramp.

In the distance, George could hear yelling. Sounded like Tommy somewhere in the arena.

"What colour is Zak and Darryl?" Clay asked.

"Um. They were a light colour." George said. "Either yellow, orange or green?"

"Oh yeah they were orange. I don't know why I asked you, sorry." Clay laughed.

George saw behind him the bright colour of Nick and Karl again and quickly shot them both.

"Fuck you Gogy!" Nick shouted before turning back down the ramp. "Let's go get Tommy and Quackity, they are trash."

"Language!" Darryl shouted through the area, and George and Clay looked at each other, before looking to where the noise came from.

It was across from them in the corner. They couldn't see the orange team, but lasers were coming from across the arena, shooting at the floor and the upper structures across.

"That's Skeppy for sure. And Darryl in on the ramp, can you see?" George pointed, seeing a tiny bit of the vest. George lined up a shot, closing one eye and shooting at the tiny gap of colour.

The colour disappeared.

Clay suddenly started shooting at the floor, leaning over the edge.

"You son of a bitch!" George heard Quackity yell from below, and Clay cackled and leaned back.

"This is awesome." He said.

"Let's go." George said, running again, with Clay in tow. As they made their way through the map, they were ambushed a couple of times but shot and ran away before the cool-down ended.

They reached near the ramp where Darryl was, leading up to the area Skeppy was sniping from. At one point, he shot Clay as they ran.

"Ok. Darryl is there basically guarding the spot. We need a plan." George said. Clay tapped the gun against his head with a smirk.

"What?" George said, but before he could say anymore, Clay let out a battle cry and ran around the side, shooting randomly up the ramp.



George jumped in shock, but quickly followed him. Darryl had been shot, and was yelling for Skeppy. George ran up the ramp past Darryl, and saw Clay at the top with a dull vest, groaning.

"George is here too!" Darryl warned his partner, but George had already rounded the edge, shooting immediately at the unprepared Skeppy, getting him right in the chest.

As soon as he did, he spun back around, shooting at Darryl the second his suit recharged, sending him into cooldown again.

"You're such a pussy Skeppy." George laughed, pointing his gun at Skeppy again, who was spamming the trigger at George with no laser coming out.

"I'm just a god."

"You suck. Go or I'll kill you repeatedly, farming points." George said, as Skeppy's suit recharged and immediately shut off as George shot him.

He groaned.

"Geppy, come on." Darryl said, as Clay shot him again. Skeppy flipped George off before running after Darryl.

"Woo!" Clay cheered, taking the standing spot where Skeppy was, looking out at the arena. "Woah this is a good spot, you can see a lot and no one can shoot you."

"We didn't get them to take the spot. It's not that good, since everyone learns where they get shot and avoid the areas. We can't snipe, we have to hunt down the others." George said, but Clay shot down at the floor.

"Got Ranboo. You're right, he's really tall." Clay said.

"Come on, let's go hunt down Tommy and Quackity. They'll be easy points." George said, turning and jogging back down the ramp, but he got shot in the chest, his suit going dark. Skeppy was waiting for them.

"How the turn tables." Skeppy gloated. George turned and ran back so he could recharge. Clay hadn't left the spot yet, and heard George get shot.

"Ok new plan." George started, but Clay grinned, holding his gun in front of him.

"Who needs a plan when I have insane skill." Clay said, then ran around the corner with a battle cry, shooting his gun.

Of course, he got shot instantly, and turned back around to George who was shaking his head.

Clay was impulsive.

"You remind me of a friend." George muttered, racking his brain for a plan.

"Who?"

"Ok, I have a plan. TOMMY!" George screamed.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT FUCKER." Tommy screamed back, from somewhere near.

"LANGUAGE."

"YOU'RE SHIT." George yelled.

"YOU SON OF A BITCH." Tommy screamed back, and George saw a flash of green, well, a yellow to George, run through the map. Clay was about to shoot Tommy, who was being followed by Quackity, but George stopped him.

"Wait." He said.

"Get them Skeppy!" They heard Darryl yell, and George took their opportunity to run around the corner and shoot Darryl and Skeppy, who has shot Tommy and Quackity.

There was a stand off between the six of them. Clay and George were shooting between them all, waiting for their suits cooldown to end.

"That's cheating!" Tommy yelled, as his suit deactivated once again.

"Then run, child." George said. Tommy bared his teeth, illuminated by the strange lighting in the arena. But Quackity grabbed his arm and pulled him away. Darryl and Skeppy ran too.

George took Clay's arm and pulled him a different way.

"The game ends in thirty seconds." A robotic announcement came across the arena, as they ran through.

"I hear someone running." Clay said, stopped George, and they both hid behind a wall.

The footsteps got closer, and then red ran right in front of them, immediately going dark as George and Clay shot Tubbo and Ranboo, who both screamed.

"Holy balls you scared the shit out of us." Tubbo said, bending over to catch his breath.

"Ten."

"Run sophomores, RUN." George screamed, a demonic smile on his face as he repeatedly shot lasers at the two, who turned to run. But George ran after them, laughing like a maniac as the countdown continued.

He could vaguely hear a wheeze behind him.

"Four."

"FUCK YOU GOGY!" A scream came out of nowhere, and Nick barrelled into George, knocking the two of them to the ground, George getting shot in the process.

"Two."

"PANDAS!"

"Game over." The announcement said, and everyone's vests returned to their default colour, and the lights in the arena grew in brightness.

Nick was still lying on top of George, cackling with the gun pressed to George's head. George was scowling at him.

"Nick." Karl laughed, and Nick rolled off of George.

"Let's go see the scoreboard! We for sure won." Nick said, grabbing Karl's arm and pulling him towards the exit.

George sat up, and a hand appeared in front of him, attached to a laughing blonde.

"Incredible ending." Clay said, as George took the hand with a sour look.

"Nick body slammed me." George complained, which made Clay laugh more.

They made their way to the exit, and saw everyone else back in the room, a big scoreboard on the screen.

### **Leaderboard**

**1st:** 18,080

Blue

**2nd:** 15,445

Orange

**3rd:** 14,920

Magenta

**4th:** 11,710

Red

**5th:** 9,045

Green

George turned to Clay with a wide smile and cheered.

"We won!" Clay yelled.

"Let's fucking go!" George yelled, while everyone else scoffed or rolled their eyes at them.

"Only because you two cheated." Tommy pointed.

"We didn't *cheat*. At least we weren't fricking sniping the whole damn time." George said, pointing at Skeppy and Darryl. "That's the only reason you guys even got close to winning."

"Nuh uh." Skeppy retorted.

"George, how on earth did you get that many points." Karl said, pointing to the individual scoreboard beside it.

**1st:** 11,000

George

**2nd:** 8,600

Skeppy

**3rd:** 8,520

Nick

**4th:** 7,080

Clay

**5th:** 6,845

Darryl

**6th:** 6,400

Karl

**7th:** 6,105

Tubbo

**8th:** 5,605

Ranboo

**9th:** 5,045

Tommy

**10th:** 4,005

Quackity

"What the fuck!" Quackity yelled.

"How are you so bad." Nick laughed at him.

"Clay you did so good for your first game." Darryl said with a kind smile.

"Thanks. I had a good teacher though." Clay said, dropping an arm around George's shoulders, who blushed.

"George is a different breed." Tubbo said.

"Yeah how did you even manage to get exactly 11,000." Ranboo pointed out.

"He's hacking." Skeppy said.

"No, he's just cracked." Clay said, removing the arm from George's shoulders.

"He's cracked, your honour." George said, somehow mocking his own British accent.

"Free-for-all now? I need to prove the only reason I lost was because I had a shit teammate." Tommy said, arms crossed against his chest.

"You're the shit one! You were the one who was like *oo let's crawl on our stomachs across the bridge so we won't get shot* but then proceeded to run away after leaving me alone on the floor." Quackity said, and Tommy burst out laughing.

"You looked ridiculous. And I did better by myself."

"You were barely better than me!" Quackity pointed at the scoreboard.

George glanced at Clay, who pulled out his phone and bit his lip.

"Do you have to go?" George asked, ignoring the arguments. Clay sighed.

"I mean. The meeting is at 11. It's 10:30 now, and I have to walk back." Clay said.

"Are you leaving, Clay?" Nick said, grabbing everyone's attention.

"Uh. Yeah, my father wants me at some dumb meeting. I'm sorry guys. But thanks for letting me join, it was a lot of fun." Clay smiled, trying to unbuckle his vest. George saw his struggle and

reached out to help, clicking the buttons on both sides and loosening the straps for him. Clay sent him a small thanks and pulled it off.

"Thanks for joining, Clay. You should hang out more with us. You make good competition." Darryl said.

"Thanks. I'll see you guys later." Clay said with a wave, grabbing his stuff and about to leave.

George bit his lip as Clay walked away, but before he left the room, George ran over, stopping him.

"Wait! Um... thanks. For you know, letting me and Nick stay over. We had a lot of fun. I was sort of worried about it but it was actually ok. So thanks for, you know, making it ok." George said nervously, fiddling with his fingers. Clay smiled and gave George a hug, who hugged back hesitantly.

"Thanks for coming, and for staying. I know how stressed you were. It means a lot you stayed for me." Clay said, and pulled away. "See you at school." Clay smiled as he walked away, out of the room and out of the building.

George turned back around, ears red, to see all his friends staring.

"Shut up. I'm going to destroy all of you." George gritted his teeth, and hit his gun against his hand.

The free-for-all game was going... interesting. George was yellow this time, since colour didn't matter too much. He was certain he was winning, he hadn't missed a single shot and hadn't been hit once.

He had spent most of his time being smart, targeting the worst players. He knew Skeppy was sniping again, but decided he wasn't much of a threat. If George could just farm points from the likes of Quackity and Tommy, he knew he would win

And it was never difficult to lose them, since Quackity voices his mistakes with loud swears, and Tommy's screams are extremely loud.

He was also being targeted, by Nick especially. It was smart, but not really working, since George got the jump on him more often than not.

George was actually having fun. He let loose and just existed in this moment with his closest friends. His mind had stopped worrying and his biggest stress was currently Tubbo, who had found a nifty little spot blocking his way to upstairs.

Until, of course, the piercing sound of doom shattered his bubble of bliss.

The alert was louder than every sound in the arena, for sure letting everyone know where George was, since he was the only one who kept his phone.

The alert set off his fight or flight more than the entire laser tag game.

He ran for cover, hiding in a corner and pulled out his phone, the light blinding him in the darkness.

**ALERT**

**GNotFound and Dream requested immediately to Mayor's office**

George's grip on his phone tightened, and he switched it off, his jaw clenching so hard he thought he would break a tooth.

Really, it was about time the Mayor called a meeting. There was a lot to discuss.

George couldn't run out of the arena now. It would look very suspicious for starters, and he couldn't just leave his friends without much warning.

"Where's the British fuck?" He heard Nick yell.

"I saw him go that way!" Tubbo snitched.

*So they are teaming. I see how it is.*

"Cross teaming isn't allowed, idiots." George called, then ran up a ramp so he had a higher vantage point.

"The game ends in thirty seconds." The robotic voice announced.

"Charge!" Karl screamed, and George could hear all their footsteps sprinting below him and up the ramp.

George rolled his eyes, bringing the gun up to his eye.

Like a bunch of idiots, they all ran straight into his line of sight, being shot down one at a time.

"You guys just make it too easy." George whined, shooting repeatedly even though the vests had shut off.

Nick ran at him again, but George dodged him, laughing as Nick almost tripped.

But he was shoved to the ground by someone on his back, a war cry from Tommy.

"Get off!" George yelled, still firing his gun randomly but unable to get up due to the six foot sophomore on his back.

"Ten."

"I want to shoot him."

"No, I am!"

"I pinned him to the floor!"

"I'm losing!"

George's instinct was to slam his gun up behind him and knock Tommy in the face to startle him, then flip over and kick him off.

But this was laser tag, not some supervillain fight with people's lives at stakes.

George got shot, by God knows who. But the countdown ended seconds later and the game finished.

"We defeated him!" Tommy cheered.

"Great. Now can you get the fuck off me, Tomathy." George said against the floor. Tommy obliged and got up, and everyone ran to the exit to see the scores.

George got up and followed with a sigh, clipping the gun to his vest, already predicting the scores.

"WHAT."

Yep, he won, once again.

•

George hit his head against the tree. Leaving his friends was difficult, since they wanted to play another round. Obviously George had to go.

He transformed and made it to the park near the mansion where him and Dream meet. But Dream wasn't here yet. There was two options here. One, Dream is running really late, or two, he got here first and since George was late, realised he might not be coming. So Dream might already be at the Mayor's.

George groaned. He didn't want to go at all, but in the chance Dream was already at the meeting, he didn't want to leave him alone to deal with the inevitable lecture.

"Please be there already, Dream." George muttered and turned to leave.

"GNotFound!" He heard a yell, and turned to see a young boy running over, his mother chasing after him. The boy ran all the way over and jumped on him. George caught him, and the child wrapped his arms around him.

*Ew. A child.*

"Hi." George said in shock, with a smile.

"I'm so sorry. He loves you and Dream." His mother caught up.

"That's alright. Hey, buddy. What's your name?" George asked. The kid pulled away and looked into his goggles.

"Parker."

"How old are you?"

"Seven." He said, with a grin with gaps in his teeth.

"Wow, you're very grown up." George said.

"I know." He said, puffing out his chest. George looked at the Mom and stuck out his free hand.

"It's nice to meet you." He said, still unsure how to talk to people as his superhero self. She smiled and shook his hand.

"And you. Sorry we have kept you waiting, you have to see the Mayor don't you?" She said.

"Yeah, but that's ok." He glanced back at the boy. "Do you want a photo?" He asked. He's taken a few photos with people before. Not many, since usually he's preoccupied or about to transform back. But people are always so excited for it.

"If it's not too much trouble." She said, so they both posed for a photo his Mom took.

When they finished, he placed the kid back down.

"Bye Parker." George waved.

"Bye GNotFound!" He laughed, and took his mother's hand and they began to walk away. "I want to be a superhero when I'm older." He said.

George felt his smile fall.

*No, no you don't.*

## Chapter End Notes

What hogwarts house do you think I would be in



# I'm in love with someone else...

## Chapter Summary

George has a meeting with the mayor and his son, Clay. But Dream is nowhere to be found.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George took a deep breath and knocked. Funny to think he was here just this morning, with Nick and Clay.

*Clay.*

*Oh my God.*

*He said he has to be at a meeting with the Mayor*

*This... this is the meeting.*

George didn't have enough time to process, before the door opened and he stepped inside, his brain no longer in control of his feet.

The Mayor was sat at his desk, George could swear the man never moves from that seat. But that wasn't who George looked at.

Clay was also on the other side of the desk, but behind and to the side, almost shoved to the corner of the room. He looked slightly pale, and anxious, his leg was bouncing up and down and he was tapping his pen against a pad of paper.

His eyes met George's almost instantly, and his fidgeting stopped.

George felt the nerves start to creep in. Clay was here to watch... and Dream, well, Dream was nowhere to be found.

Guess he was alone.

"GNotFound." The mayor said. George analysed him. His neck was red, and eyes narrowed. He had tense shoulders and his hands were bunched together on the table.

He was not in a good mood.

"Sir." George replied. The mayor nodded at the chair, and George took it, agonisingly aware of the empty seat beside him.

"You've met my son." The mayor gestured to Clay. "This is good experience for him so he will be taking notes." He said. Clay stared at George, and gave him a small, tight-lipped smile. George smiled back, a genuine smile, hoping to calm him down slightly. It seemed like it worked, surprisingly, since Clay took a deep breath.

"Where is Dream?" The mayor said, taking George's attention again.

"I don't know sir."

"Don't you both usually arrive together?"

"Yes, but it's been a while and he hasn't shown up. He may not be able to come. So it's just me for now." George said. A muscle in the mayor's jaw twitched and George braced himself.

"Does he not understand the importance of this meeting?" He said.

"I'm sure he does. We both know what this is probably about. I'm sure there's a very good reason he isn't here." George said, being very careful about remaining calm. Especially in front of Clay. He didn't want him to see how harsh his father is.

The Mayor looked like he was about to say something, but changed his mind, closing his eyes for a second to control himself.

"Fine. Ok. Well let's start with the last supervillain fight." The mayor said, leaning forward in his chair, staring down at George, who nodded.

"The one who was taking people's voices."

"Yes. I want to know exactly what your thought process was for bringing the villain's *main target* to this mansion." He said, also surprisingly calm.

"Well, the villain knew that the target was at the station, so we needed somewhere to take her that was relatively secure. This mansion has some of the highest security." George said.

"Not enough security for a villain. If they had found out where you had taken her, they could have come and caused damaged to the mansion, and put the lives of myself, my family and my staff in danger." The mayor said.

"That wasn't the intention, and if I believed the villain was an actual threat to life, I wouldn't have-"

"I don't care what your intentions were. It's what you decided. You decided that the safety of me and my family was not as important as-"

"I assure you every life is as important as the next. The villain was not going to kill anyone, they only wanted this one girl. I wouldn't let anything happen to you or your family." George said, glancing at Clay, who was biting his nails.

"How could you possibly guarantee that!" The mayor raised his voice.

"Father... me and Drista weren't even here. We were at school." Clay interrupted.

The mayor turned to him, and Clay shrunk back in his seat, eyes returning to stare at the empty page in front of him.

"What did I tell you, Clay." His father seethed.

"To stay quiet." Clay said quietly. The mayor nodded and turned back to George.

"I'm sorry about my decision to bring the girl here. It was in my best interests to keep everyone safe. I would never intentionally put your family in danger. If I believed there was any danger." George said, looking at Clay who was scratching his pen in the corner of his notepad.

"Never do that again. Don't ever use my home as a safe bunker. Got it?" The mayor seethed. George nodded. "Ok. Good. Now would you care to explain exactly what the *hell* happened at the Tv interview?" He said, his voice raising in the middle of his sentence. George raised his chin.

"Well, the questions got personal and rude and I wasn't going to sit there and let her cross the boundaries we very clearly set." George said. He thought this was the one thing the Mayor would agree with. He understands no one can know their identity. Right?

"You made a fool of yourself and your partner! And me! You ran out of the interview like a couple of ignorant teenagers with better things to do. Do you realise how badly you ruined your reputation? The entire city saw that interview and saw you abandon it."

"It was for a good reason. Did you watch the interview? Did you see what information she was trying to get out of us?"

"It was a celebrity interview. What questions did you expect? Sure, some were bordering personal, but just move on. Answer the dumb questions."

"We aren't celebrities. I don't see any police officers on the news!"

"You are teenage superheroes. Of course it's interesting, we've never experienced this before. Everyone wants to know what it is like!"

"That doesn't mean they have to know our relationships or age!"

"You did not need to run out of the interview like *acoward*." The mayor spat.

"A coward?" George scoffed. "It wasn't cowardly. It was actually the opposite. Leaving the interview when it got too much instead of staying just to please everyone. I made the decision to leave, because I was uncomfortable and I decided the interview was useless."

"Useless? It was *my* decision."

"And it was a horrible idea. What was the point? I thought it was to be able to speak to the city and assure them we will be there to protect them. But no. It was just a celebrity gossip session. It was a horrible idea." George said, leaning closer with a stubborn look on his face. Every word he spoke made the mayor even more red.

"How. Dare you." The mayor said. George didn't budge. The two glared at each other, their clashing personalities and beliefs making the two of them grow more hostile by the second.

Clay was sunken in his seat, his eyes flicking between the two. This was getting too much, and they haven't even started yelling too loud.

"U-um. Father?" Clay said. The mayor gritted his teeth and turned to his son, a terrifying glare made to kill written on his pudgy face. Clay lost his train of thought.

"What?" His father spat. Clay froze again. Why does he always freeze? "I told you to stay still and quiet." He said.

"What is the point of him being here if he has to shut up? If you want your son to learn, let him voice opinions." G said. The mayor turned back to him, a vein in his forehead popping out. Clay's eyes went wide.

"You're right. Clay." His father turned back to him, a sickly fake smile now plastered on his face,

not disguising his anger very well at all. "What did you think of the interview?" He asked.

Clay looked between the two of them.

"I-it... well, I guess, um, well-"

"Spit it out!"

"It got a bit personal a-and awkward." Clay said quickly. The mayor's fake smile disappeared, and his eye twitched. Clay cleared his throat. "And um." He glanced at G. "Well, I think it was a good thing it ended early." He said softer, looking down at his paper.

He could feel his father's stare drilling into him.

"See? Even civilians thought it got too much and I made the right decision to leave." G said. Clay winced. He wasn't helping.

"Clay doesn't understand." The mayor said. "Look at me." He growled, and Clay looked up. He was sure he was pale. "Do you remember what we spoke about in dinner the other day? About the heroes? What do you think of GNotFound?"

"What-what do you mean?" Clay asked, looking at G, who was watching him closely, biting his lip but his expression unreadable, hidden by the goggles.

"I mean." The mayor's fist clenched over a stapler in pent up anger. "Do you think he is a coward?" The mayor said. Clay swallowed, looking at his father.

"N-"

"Think about your words, Clay. Say it. Say GNotFound is a coward." He said.

Clay's insides were churning like a blender. He felt sick. Everywhere. He wanted to throw up. And then throw himself off a building.

He saw his father lift the mug on his desk.  
A subtle threat.

"Clay." G whispered, even though the mayor would hear it. Clay looked at him. "It's ok. Say it." G said, a small smile. Clay felt even more sick.

"But-"

"Clay." The mayor snapped, his hand clenching over the mug so hard his hand was red.

"GNotFound is a coward." Clay whispered, looking down. He squeezed the sides of his notepad so hard it was digging into his palm, where crescent shape marks were already branded from his bad habit in nightmares.

Tears pricked his eyes. He was a horrible person. Unable to stand up for his friend, unable to go against his father. He gave in, and uttered a lie, a poisonous lie. One that seeped into the cuts in his cheek and blackened his body.

Clay was a horrible person.

"There we go." The Mayor said, his grip loosening on the mug and turning back to the hero. G had his arms crossed.

"That was obviously coercion. You gave him no choice." G scoffed.

"I never threatened him."

"He's fucking terrified of you. Anyone would be. He's a teenager! Just a kid who you manipulate and scream at to get what you want. He shouldn't even be here. He should be doing what teenagers are supposed to do, like hang out with friends. Not sit in this room, watching his horrible excuse for a father yell at someone." G said.

Clay rubbed his eyes. G was standing up for him even now. Even as a weak civilian he barely knows. Even as a random kid who sounds like his father when he yells. G stood up for everyone.

But Clay nor Dream could even muster the words to defend him too.

"How dare you tell me how to parent my son!" The mayor yelled, standing up. G stood up too, still much shorter.

"You can scream at me all you want. I don't care if you take your anger out on me. Let Clay go. He shouldn't have to watch this or deal with this." G said, gesturing to Clay who refused to look up.

"I say when he leaves. He is my son."

"You yell at your son!"

"To teach him!"

"He's just a kid!"

"You're also just a kid." Clay whispered, squeezing his eyes shut. But they both went silent, and he looked up. His father and G were both staring at him, and he realised they heard what he said. "Y-you're a kid too." Clay said to G, who dropped his hands.

There was a silence for a moment, until G sighed through his nose.

"Yeah, but I've had to grow up a fair bit." G said with a sad smile.

But it disappeared the second he looked back at the mayor.

"Clay is leaving. Now." George said, walking over to the teary boy. There was practically steam coming out of the Mayor's ears by now.

"Fine." The Mayor said, then sent a fiery stare at his son, who was still staring at the floor, avoiding it.

George put a hand gently around Clay's upper arm and pulled him to his feet, taking the notepad out of his hands. George glanced at it, and saw small random drawings in the corner that grew darker the harder he pressed into the paper. He put it down on the chair Clay was just sitting in.

George gently pulled Clay away from the Mayor, and towards the door, opening it for him and nudging him out of the room.

"I'm sorry you had to be here." George said. Clay ran a hand through his hair.

"I'm sorry I called you a coward." Clay whispered, but George just smiled, a hand resting on Clay's shoulder.

"I know you had to. It doesn't affect me, I've been called worse."

"I'm the coward." Clay added, and George's smile fell.

"No. You're not. Clay, you were the bravest one in that room." George said, gesturing back inside. Clay shook his head. "I'm serious."

"GNotFound." The Mayor basically yelled. George's jaw tensed again.

"Go be a teenager." George said, removing his hand from Clay's shoulder, and turning back into the room, shutting the door.

"I can't." Clay whispered to the closed door.

He turned and walked away from the door and the guards, back to his room. He really, *really* didn't want to go back. But he knew he had to.

*At least I won't be entirely useless as Dream.*

Clay went to his window in his room, and opened up the one panel on the far left. He climbed out like he had a million times before, and stood on the edge of the house. He knew the way down without being caught on the cameras.

He quickly shuffled along the edge, so he was around the other side of the house, in the shadows of the trees so no one will see. He climbed onto the tree, and kept his footing to the side of the tree the cameras didn't catch. When he made it to the other side of the tree, he could reach the fence. He marked the exact point in the fence the cameras missed with scratches on the paint.

He carefully pulled himself on top of the fence, and then jumped down, shuffling along the fence to the left, until he was beneath a large tree which blocked the camera, and he put his hands in his pockets, beginning his walk to one of his best transforming spots.

An alleyway, of course.

Eventually, Clay had transformed into Dream and made his way through the normal entrance to the mansion, and was escorted up to the office.

He took a deep breath as he remembered exactly what was going on inside, and he knocked and entered.

G was sitting now, his hands on the edge of the armrest of the chair, digging into the wood. The Mayor was standing, and pacing, holding the notepad Clay had earlier. Mayor Block wasn't using it, just holding it really tightly.

They both turned when the door opened. The Mayor's face grew somehow redder, but G was the opposite. His hands let go of the arm rest, and his shoulders physically relaxed. He let out a sigh and stood up, walking over to Clay and enveloping him in a hug.

Clay hugged back, slightly confused since they never really hugged.

"Thank God you're here, Dream. I was honestly reaching my limit." George whispered.

"I'm sorry I was late." He whispered back.

"Are you both fucking gay? Quit hugging and sit." The Mayor said. Dream and George let go. George really wanted to retaliate, but gave up.

He was exhausted. This meeting has felt like it's gone forever, and he was getting tired of arguing. He knew Dream wasn't going to contribute much, that's who he is, but at least he was here.

"Why the hell are you late. Dream?" The Mayor demanded as they both sat. The Mayor sat down too. It seems like Dream's arrival was a small break for the tension.

"I'm really sorry, I couldn't transform anywhere, it wasn't safe."

"That's no excuse."

"I think that is actually the *only* excuse he can *possibly* give you. What do you want him to say?" George said, his increasing annoyance and frustration clear. The Mayor turned back to him, pointing a pen.

"Don't you dare start-"

"So what have I missed?" Dream said. George didn't break eye contact with the Mayor as he leaned back in the seat.

"Well. To summarise, we can never use his house as a safe bunker for anyone again. And I should also go back in time to the interview and expose our identities." George said sarcastically.

"Oh you little-"

"Alright!" Dream clapped. "Seems like there's not much we can actually do for both of those issues. They are in the past right?"

"Yep. And I've already been lectured enough. Was there anything else you wanted to address, *sir*." George said.

The Mayor paused for a minute, eyes closed as if he was trying to control his anger. He cleared his throat.

"You both failed to get my safe back." The Mayor started. It was an abrupt change in conversation, but almost a relieving one.

"We tried our best. We found the safe, but they took what was inside already. I already discussed this with you that night." George sighed, preparing for an argument.

*I'm already at my limit. If he says anything out of line, I'm not staying.*

"It's completely unacceptable! I've spent the entire week getting my detectives to track down the two criminals you described, but nothing. It's your fault. So now you both are going to get it back." The Mayor said.

"How is it our fault you lost your stupid safe?" George scoffed.

"What was even in it?" Dream asked, curious.

"None of your damn business. It's very valuable to me, my family, and the future of this city. It's your fault because you let the culprits go." He said, his ears growing red once again with anger.

"We don't know how to track people down. We fight villains, not look at fingerprints or alibis. This is a police job, not a superheroes job." George said.

"It's your job to protect the city. You said one of the culprits is a villain. So it's your job, is it not?"

The mayor spat.

"But we have no clue where they went or their real identity. How could we possibly help?"

"I don't care what you do. You get me the contents of the safe back and the criminals arrested. If not, the both of you will hand me your jewels." The mayor said, teeth bared.

George and Dream's eyes widened in pure shock.

"You have no right to do that." George said with a laugh in shock.

"Yes I do. I'm the mayor and what I say goes. I have to protect the city and if I believe that neither of you are beneficial, then I say good riddance."

George stood up, with his fists clenched.

"You didn't give us the jewels, and you have no right to take them."

"Why not? It would solve all my problems. The Blade would stop, and I would never have to see the two of you ever again." The Mayor replied, also standing up. His height was made to intimidate George, but he stood his ground.

"You can't give the bad guy what he wants! Why do you think he wants the jewels? Why do you think he's doing whatever he can to get them? It's clearly not for good." George retaliated.

"I don't care why he wants them!" The Mayor yelled.

"Well you should!" George yelled back.

"Please stop." Dream mumbled. George turned to his partner.

"Dream, stand up." He said, and Dream obliged. George turned back to the Mayor. "We are leaving. Don't call us again unless it's serious. We have the same goal, to protect the city, so that's what we are going to do. Your safe has nothing to do with that. I refuse to sit here and let you threaten and abuse us. Dream and I are leaving." George said, staring straight into the Mayor's dark eyes.

"I. Own. You. I own this city and I own the both of you. You have to say as I say."

"We don't have to do shit!" George yelled, and then grabbed Dream's wrist and pulled him out of the room. He was half expecting the guards to stop them, but they didn't. So George pulled Dream the entire way out of the mansion.

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"Are... you ok?" Dream asked when they reached a random rooftop in the city. George turned to punch a wall, which made a loud sound.

George growled and punched it again. And again. Dream stepped forward and stood in front of the wall, grabbing both of the angry boy's fists.

"G, please take a breath." Dream said, rubbing his thumbs of the knuckles of George's hands. George pulled away from Dream, throwing his arms by his sides.

"I'm fine, Dream." He said through gritted teeth. Dream lowered his hands, taking a step towards his partner.



The pair looked at each other. George was still seething about the meeting, while Dream was watching the movements of G, waiting for him to snap again.

"The fucking audacity of that man!" George finally yelled, his hands balling into fists again.

"It's ok. He can't actually do anything." Dream said calmly.

"I don't care about what he can and can't do! It's about what he says! He's awful, and cruel, and manipulative. God, I feel so bad for his kids, for Clay."

"For Clay?" Dream asked.

"You weren't there, but his son was in the meeting. God, his father was just as bad to him as he is to us. He forced him to be quiet, but then made him say things he didn't want to say. He looked terrified, and sick, and I felt so bad. I made him leave. He's just a kid."

"Aren't... aren't we both just kids too?"

"Well, yeah. But this is our job. We've dealt with this for a year, we have responsibilities bigger than the both of us. He is just a teenager, who deserves to hang out with his friends without the pressure of the Mayor. Unfortunately he's related to that fuckwit."

"Do you... do you think he will turn out like his father?" Dream asked hesitantly.

"No. No way. I've met him before, at the ceremony. He was so sweet. He came over to make sure I was ok after Block yelled at me. His sister was nice too, very sarcastic. Reminded me of my... someone. But no, there is no way in hell they will turn out like that man. But God, they have to deal with him daily.

Dream leaned against the wall, his arms crossed against his chest, as George paced.

"He really thinks he owns the place, doesn't he? What makes him think he can just take our jewels? He didn't give them to us, L did. Well, the Liberator I'm guessing." George continued.

"That's what confuses me. I thought the Liberator died with the Blade three years ago." Dream said. "That's what you told me."

"Well, that's what I thought too. But the Blade survived, what's stopping the Liberator? Maybe they just can't fight anymore, so they needed others too. That's why they gave us the jewels. I know they don't want us to know their identity, but we need to find out who it is. I have so many questions. They defeated Blade the first time, almost. We need to know how." George said, huffing and sitting down on the roof. Dream kicked off the wall and walked over to sat down in front of him, both heroes crossing their legs.

"L is the only person who knows our identities." Dream said, and George nodded.

"I have no clue how we are going to find them. Clearly they don't want us to know, they can't risk the Blade finding them. They have something he wants, and our identities. If the Blade finds them, it's game over for everyone."

"So if they are hiding, how do we find them?"

"I don't know. I'm still confused as to why they chose *me* to have the Sapphire. Like, why me? Do they know me? Do they still know me?"

"If it is someone who knows both of us... do you think we might know each other in real life?" Dream asked slowly, his eyes filling with hope.

"I doubt it. L said we can't know each other's identities, there is no way they'd put us near each other that we could accidentally find out." George said, shaking his head. Dream sighed.

"Damn."

"Why do you want to know who I am so bad? You'll be incredibly disappointed." George said. Dream furrowed his eyebrows and made a soft sound of confusion.

"What? Why would you think that? I would literally die to know who you are. I want to know all of you, I wish so bad that I could see you when we aren't in costume, when we aren't doing our jobs. I don't care who you are, I want to know the boy behind the mask." Dream said, his tone completely serious as he stared into George's goggles. It took George by surprise.

"You... why do you want to know so bad?"

*"Because I'm in love with you."*

Clay never expected the words to come out like that, so soon. He thought he would never say them. But he couldn't help it, they were weighing him down, drowning him. He needed to say them soon, he needed G to know.

"I'm... I'm in love with you." He repeated, slower this time, with more emphasis. He needed G to know how serious he was. This wasn't just one of his jokes.

George was frozen in place, trying to process what was happening. He never in a million years predicted those words fall out of Dream's mouth in a tone that wasn't a joke. He rarely hears his partner talk like this, like every word he said was heavy with anxiousness, hope, and *meaning*.

"Are... are you serious?" George said, almost in a whisper. Clay nodded, reaching forward and grabbing one of his hands.

"I know it's ridiculous. I know you probably don't feel the same, but I had to say it."

"You don't love me, Dream." George said, trying to pull away, but Clay held it tight.

"I do. I really, really do. I've spent almost a year trying to tell myself that I don't. Trying to argue with my heart that I can't love you, I don't even know you. But how could I not love you? Someone as smart and as caring, and as incredible as you? Someone who puts up with me, who has a big enough heart to care for everyone, someone who puts everyone else before themselves. Someone as beautiful as you." Clay said.

George's mouth was open in shock, trying to process every word his partner was saying.

"I love the way your mind works, I love how you stand up for me, I love how I know when you roll your eyes, even though I can't even see it. I love how much trust you have in me, I love you, G." Clay couldn't stop, filling the silence with sweet words he has been thinking for a year.

George was silent and still, he had no clue what was happening.

"Please say something. I can't see your eyes, I don't know what you are thinking." Clay whispered.

"I... Dream, you don't love me."

"But I do."

"No, you don't." George pulled away from Dream. "You don't know me."

"I do know you. I know you probably the most in the entire city."

"You can't love someone you don't know the name of. You can't love someone who you don't know the interests of. You can't love someone you only see one side of. You see GNotFound. You see the superhero, with super powers and enhanced skills, and the purpose of helping people. You don't see the normal me, a high school student with slipping grades, mental issues and is a crappy friend. You don't know me, Dream."

"I *want* to know. I want to know all of you. I want to know your favourite subject, what college your applying for, I want to meet your friends, I want to call you a nickname. I want to get lunch with you, study with you, see your family. I want the normal things, I want to know the normal you."

"Dream, I'm sorry-"

"Do you love me?" Clay asked. It was a stupid question, really. It was designed to make the both of them hurt. Clay didn't have to ask it. Things were already going south. He already knew the answer. It's like he was asking to have his heart broken.

"No, Dream." George sighed. "No, I don't. Not in the way you want me to, and I probably never could." George said gently, but it didn't stop Clay's heart from shattering anyways. But Clay did it to himself, he knew the consequences of asking that question.

"You could." Clay asked, grabbing George's hands again, his voice desperate. George shook his head.

"I... I'm in love with someone else."

Clay stopped. He had no more words. He's ruined everything. What was he expecting?

"Someone else?"

"Yes. Someone who knows the real me."

"But *I'm* the one who knows the real you." Clay said in frustration. George pulled away again.

"No, Dream. This isn't the real me, this is GNotFound. He's cooler and stronger and faster."

"But *this* is the real *me*." Clay said desperately.

"No. It's not. Your civilian self is the real you."

"No it's not! That guy is trapped! And he is hiding, and feels like no one can ever know him. Dream is free. I have goals, I have a purpose." Clay's frustration was clear in his hand gestures.

George stood up, and Clay followed.

"I'm sorry, Dream. I really, really am. I had no idea you felt that way." George said calmly.

"I'm sorry too." Clay said. "That you think the people in your civilian life know you! I'm your sorry you're *delusional*! The boy you love could never love you like I do. He doesn't know you like *I* do. And he never fucking will!" Clay said harshly, his teeth bared.

George swallowed, staying still.

"And you'll never know me either." George said, and then turned and started walking away, not giving Dream a second glance.

Clay was frozen in place. He couldn't follow, only watch as he replayed the conversation in his head.

G had long gone, and Clay has been standing on the lonely rooftop for half an hour. But it only just hit him how badly he messed up.

Not only did he confess to the love of his life, who rejected him and said they loved someone else, but he also proceeded to insult him. He said that no one in G's life truly knows him. And no one could love him like he did.

And he ruined possibly the only meaningful relationship in his life, once again.

Clay sat down on the ground and put his head in his hands.

*I fucked up.*

*I fucked up so bad.*

•

George arrived back in his house after de-transforming and he instantly collapsed on his bed. He ran a hand through his hair and then covered his face.

*I fucked up.*

George ran through the entire conversation, trying to figure out where it went wrong. He had no idea Dream liked him like that. He thought the flirting and the jokes were just that, jokes.

How could someone possibly love him? How could someone say such nice things? That was the first time someone had ever told him they loved him. That they were *in love* with him.

And George didn't handle it well.

He panicked, and maybe could have handled it better. He really didn't need to tell Dream he loved someone else. But he never lied. He didn't like Dream like that, and he knows they could never be more than friends, more than partners. It would never work. He doesn't know Dream. He could never love someone he doesn't know.

George needed to be loved by someone who he can actually be with. Someone who isn't just a fantasy,

"How can he love me if he doesn't even know me?" George whispered to himself.

If Dream *really, truly* loved him, he would have fallen in love with George Davidson, not GNotFound.

Ouch. Good job, Dream.

Also, for those wondering from last week, I am a Slytherin!

And it's my birthday this Saturday, MCC day. I'm excited :D

Thanks for reading! Hopefully things start picking up from here <333

# Heartbeat

## Chapter Summary

Clay has a bad panic attack at school, George tries to help.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George didn't get any sleep over the weekend. Which isn't unusual, but he hated his thoughts so much he almost considered actually taking the insomnia pills so he could go a night without overthinking everything.

His mother checked on him a few times each night, to make sure he wasn't sleepwalking, but George would fake being asleep so she wouldn't suspect anything.

He wasn't functioning very well come Monday morning. But whether seen as a blessing or curse, he had an appointment with Dr Puffy.

"So, George. How has your sleep been? Did you see a Doctor?" She asked. George nodded.

"I have chronic insomnia. They gave me pills." He said simply.

"That's great news, George. Now you might be able to get good sleep. How has it been?" She asked, typing on her tablet.

George hesitated. "Um. Yeah, it's alright. The first night I was scared so only had half a dose, but it made me sleepwalk. But I haven't sleepwalked since." He said. Puffy looked at him carefully.

"Since you've been having the full dose?" She asked.

"Yep." George lied. Puffy looked at him for a few more seconds, but looked back down at her notes.

"It can be quite nerve-racking starting prescription medicine. About how it will affect you. Did you have much anxieties about it when you started?" She asked.

George was looking at the toys on the table, remembering how Clay got to take one home. He looked back up.

"Hm? Oh. Um, I guess I was a little worried about being knocked out the entire night. Like, what if there is an emergency but I sleep through it." He said. Puffy nodded, writing.

"That's a very valid worry. Something that even people *without* insomnia medication worry about. Are you still worried about it?"

George nodded.

"It's ok to be anxious about that. And it's even ok to be so anxious you may avoid a dose for a night, especially if you are stressed about other things. This is all a new thing for you, no one is

expecting you to magically be ok with any changes. You're allowed to be hesitant and nervous. Don't keep it to yourself." Puffy said.

George sat there, very still. Can she read through him?

"Have you skipped any nights because of how worried you were?" She asked with a kind smile. George paused, unsure of how to answer. "I won't tell your parents." She added.

"Yeah." He said softly. Puffy nodded.

"And that's ok. It'll take some getting used to, this whole situation. How many times have you missed taking them?" She said. George shrugged.

"A couple." He said, and Puffy gave him a look.

"Only a couple?"

"Maybe a bit more than a couple." George said, looking away. He felt guilty, just wasting the pills. But Puffy had a weird way to get him to open up.

"Have you ever had the full dose?" She asked carefully. George hesitated for several seconds, before sighing and covering his face.

"No." He mumbled.

"That's ok, George. Why haven't you told your parents?"

"I don't want to disappoint them. They've been so supportive of me and everything I have messed up. I don't want to make them more upset."

"Ok. It's ok. How about we try something, if you're willing. So what if you take the full dose on a night of your choosing. Just for this week. Just one night, so you can learn that it is good for your body to get good, uninterrupted rest. The rest of the nights, you can take half a dose or no dose. But maybe just try it once. Just to see how your body reacts to it. If it's not the right medication for you, you can go get a different, more lighter. But maybe you should learn that your anxiousness is for nothing." She said.

"But... what if the one time I take it, something goes wrong."

"What could be the worst thing to happen?" She asked.

So much.

"W-well. There... there could be a fire, or a murderer, or a supervillain. Or literally anything." George said quickly.

"They aren't anaesthetics, George. You can be woken up by people."

"What about alarms? Can they wake me up?"

"I'm not sure which medication you have. Some are lighter than others. But possibly not alarms. Talk to your parents so they can wake you up. And you know they would wake you up in an emergency too." She said.

"But... but there is just so much that could go wrong." George said, growing more distressed during this conversation.

"Ok, let's come back to this." Puffy said, noticing his discomfort. George brought his hands together to fidget with his fingers.

"How is your attendance?" She asked. George recalled the last week.

"Oh. Um. Ok, well there was the whole being outed thing. I may have skipped a few classes when it got too much."

"That's understandable. You know you can come here if you don't have anywhere to go. My door is always open unless I'm with another student." She said. George nodded.

"I don't really remember. I don't think it has been too bad this week." George said. Although, he knows there was at least two villains. Niki, and the teleporting one.

"That's great George. So how is school? Your assignments and friendships?"

George cringed at the word friendship. His mind immediately going to Dream. Has he ruined their friendship? Puffy noticed his discomfort, and waited for him to say something.

"I don't know. It's complicated."

"Friendships?" She asked, and George nodded, but then shrugged.

"I just... I keep messing up. I keep liking the wrong person, and ruining my other friendships." He rambled. Puffy nodded.

"So you like someone?" She asked, trying to make sense of what he was saying. George nodded.

"Yes, but, he doesn't like me. He's obsessed with some girl." George said, and Puffy gave him a sympathetic frown. "But two other people have said they like me. And I don't know where it came from. I went from being a closeted nerd with only a couple of close friends, to being asked out by two people."

"Maybe you being comfortable in your own skin has brought confidence to other people, regarding their sexuality and feelings."

"I mean, I don't know. One of the guys I actually do kind of like, but I feel like I can't do anything because I'm still into this other guy. I don't want to lead him on. This is dumb. Why am I bothering you with typical high school crushes? I'm sorry." George laughed awkwardly, running a hand down his face.

"It's your life, and your current issues. I'm here to listen and maybe provide advice. Just because you are young and in high school and they may seem like less important problems compared to other things, it all builds up, and it's still a lot on your plate. You can tell me anything and I'm not here to judge." Puffy said kindly.

George sighed. There really was just too much on his plate.

"The first guy asked me out and I rejected him, saying I liked someone else and he was really understanding. Said he was here for me. But... the other guy, he said he loved me and asked if I loved him too, but I said no because I don't know him very well. But when I told him that, he got really upset and angry. I think I ruined our friendship." George said, his lips quivering slightly to hold in a tear.

"How close are you and the second guy as friends?"



"Well, I mean, we have known each other for a year. But we don't know much about each other. Not enough to date. I spend a lot of time with him but I don't know how he can possibly like me. He barely knows me." George said, running a hand through his hair again.

"So you spend a lot of time together but you don't know each other very well? How does that work?"

"I guess our relationship is very... school-oriented. Yeah. Like we only really talk at school and about school. Not our interests and we don't really hangout." George said, trying his best to think of an analogy for the situation with Dream.

"Did he say why he likes you?"

"He said he loved how caring I am. And my humour. How I roll my eyes when he says something dumb. And how I put others first, and he said I'm beautiful." George recalled. His mind had gone over everything that happened that night. *He hasn't even seen my face properly. How can he call me beautiful.*

"Why do you think he doesn't know you well? Seems like he pays attention." She said with a slightly confused smile.

"We... we just don't know anything else. This is dumb. I don't want to think about it." George said, hating this topic of conversation the most. Why is he spilling his guts to this random woman he doesn't know, when he can't even talk to Dream or anyone else.

"So you like this one boy who you think may be straight and likes someone else. And you have another boy you sort of like and likes you, and another boy who likes you but you don't like. And you can't date anyone because you're hung up on the first boy." Puffy said, trying to piece together everything.

"God, I sound like a high school girl with pathetic dramas." George scoffed. "I'm complaining about too many boys liking me. Wow. This was quite the reality check." He said, putting his head in his hands.

"It seems like friendships are really important to you. And maybe in this stage of your life, that's what you need. You don't need to do anything for anyone, just what you think is right for you. You have a lot on your plate, and if a relationship is too much, then just settle for friendships. Anyone who doesn't respect that shouldn't be your friend or anything more." Puffy said.

"That... is actually really good advice. I don't think I can handle the commitment of that at the moment, and I've known that for a while. But you're right. I think I need to just... take a step back. And focus on keeping my friends." George said. Puffy smiled.

He had no clue how to do any of that, but at least he had that advice in his back pocket.

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"I didn't work on bio at all over the weekend. But it's fine because I'll just do it the night before." Nick said to George, who was tapping the space bar on his laptop for no purpose, not paying too much attention.

"Why don't you just work on it now?" George sighed.

"Well that's a waste of my time. I could be talking to you now." Nick said, but then looked at George who was staring at the document on his page and still tapping the space bar. "Even though

you're barely talking to me."

"Sorry." George stopped. "I just have a lot on my mind."

"Well I want to talk. I hate sitting in silence." Nick complained.

"Then talk to someone else!" George said.

"Clay isn't here!" Nick gestured to the empty seat. "Where even is he?"

"How would I know?" George murmured, resting his head against his forearms on the table.

About five minutes later, a sound disturbed George, and he looked up to see Clay sitting down in his seat, and Nick already talking at him. Clay looked exhausted, with bags under his eyes, almost as dark as George's. He also didn't seem like he was paying attention to Nick.

"So yeah. By the way, how was your father's meeting? I saw the alert that GNotFound and Dream had a meeting too! Was it the same meeting? Did you meet them?" Nick asked Clay. Clay shrugged.

"I only saw GNotFound." Clay said softly, running a tired hand through his hair.

"What was the meeting about?" Nick asked on the edge of his seat. George saw Clay looked quite stressed.

"Nick, it's probably classified. Leave him alone." George said. Clay looked at him, and then returned to resting his chin on his hand, opening the laptop with his other one.

"God you both are dead today." Nick huffed, leaning back in his seat.

"I'm just a bit stressed about school. And tired." George said. Nick scoffed.

"Tired? Don't you get like 8 hours of sleep a night now?" He asked.

Clay glanced at George, but then looked back at his laptop.

"Yeah... it still hasn't really affected me yet." George lied.

"What about you, Clay? Tired too?" Nick asked. Clay looked up and just barely shrugged in response. Nick blinked. "Are you alright man?" He asked.

"Yeah." Clay said, but his voice was soft. George stared at him. He didn't seem ok. Maybe his father was extra harsh to him after the meeting?

The rest of the lesson was slow, and with little conversation apart from Nick. George noticed Clay grow more and more distracted, and extra fidgety. He seemed to grow more on edge as the lesson went by. It was making George slightly worried for him.

"Clay." George said, and the boy looked at him. George now noticed how shallow his breathing was. "Where's the cube Puffy gave you?" He asked. Clay reached into his pocket and pulled it out, flipping it between his fingers.

"Can you show me what it does?" George asked. Clay nodded and scooted closer with his chair, rotating the cube in front of George and pressing all the small mechanics on each side.

"Which one is the most fun to fiddle with?" George asked. Clay flipped it to the light switch,

flicking it on and off. George smiled.

"Why?" He asked.

Clay took a shaky breath. "I don't know. It just makes a good sound, and I like to try and balance it in the middle." He said, doing just that. George nodded.

"I think the silver ball is kind of cool though." George said, pointing to another side. Clay rotated it and fiddle with it.

"It's alright. But it's not as fun because it doesn't make a sound. I like the buttons though." Clay said, rotating it to another edge and presses the buttons.

"What about the joy stick thing?" George asked, and Clay moved it.

"Not my favourite." He said, going back to the light switch.

George watched Clay play around with the cube for a few minutes, and noticed his leg had stopped bouncing, and he was taking deeper breaths. George smiled and Clay looked at him, stopping the fiddling.

"Thanks George." He whispered, just before the bell went. George smiled in return and started packing up all his stuff.

"Guess I'll see you losers later. I have a psych class to go to." Nick saluted and left. George turned to Clay, who was packing up too, and was about to say something, but Wilbur came over.

"Hey guys. We have history now right?" Wilbur asked. George nodded, and when Clay stood up, they all walked to their history class.

In one of the most awkward silences George has ever experienced.

No one was talking. The three were just walking long the busy halls with no conversation. George was only thinking about how short he looked standing next to them both.

When they arrived, Wilbur walked in first and sat down in his usual seat beside Karl and Fundy. Karl gave George and Clay a wave, but Clay seemed kind of out of it.

George watched as Clay walked past his friends and go to the back where George usually sat. George quickly followed, surprised that Clay chose to sit with him yet again.

They sat down in silence too though, and no words were exchanged. Clay clearly wasn't keen on talking, and George didn't want to push him. The boy put his arms on the table and rested his head against them, looking away from George so he could only see the back of his head, a messy assortment of dirty blonde waves.

This lesson was also slow, since Mr Bell barely instructed them to do anything. George was scrolling on his phone, reading articles about the superheroes interview, seeing different people's perspective on the whole thing.

Clay didn't look up the entire lesson. George thought he had possibly fallen asleep. But when the bell rang, he finally lifted his head and grabbed his bag.

"I'll see you at gym?" Clay said. George nodded, and Clay walked over to his friends, and said something to them too before walking out by himself.

George got up and went to Karl.

"Is he ok?" George asked.

"I was going to ask you. He just said he's going to the bathroom and that he will meet us at lunch." Karl said. George nodded.

"Has something happened?" Fundy asked.

"I don't know. I don't want to pry. But I think his father might be putting a bit of pressure on him. That's just my guess though. I have no clue. Can you make sure he's ok?" George asked. The three of them nodded and they all made their way to the cafeteria.

Clay did not return during lunch.

But George had computer science next, and was feeling nervous about seeing Xavier again.

He didn't know why. Because Xavier was always so nice, and good company. Maybe he was worried he would bring up his feelings again. George still didn't know what he wanted.

But of course, Xavier didn't push. He greeted George with a smile and asked him how his weekend was. They both resumed working on their projects again, with their usual banter and conversation. George was relieved it wasn't awkward.

"You know, you should meet my friends sometime. Felicity said she misses you. And that she was worried about you since you were outed." Xavier said.

"Really? That's nice of her. I'm doing ok now though, since things have cooled down slightly." George said. Xavier smiled.

"I'll let her know."

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George couldn't participate in gym still. He still had the strap on his ankle. But Clay it seems was back in the action, playing volleyball with the rest of the class.

George couldn't help but watch him the most. But it was for a few reasons. Clay was acting strangely. As the games went on, he noticed his demeanour change. He seemed less enthusiastic, and very distracted. At one point, he was just standing there zoned out, and didn't notice when the ball was spiked right at him.

At one point, he was pacing, his hands balled into tight fists. It reminded George of when Clay had that nightmare. It was clear he wasn't doing alright, especially when he pressed the heel of his palm against his eyes, shaking his head.

The most obvious sign something was wrong, was when Clay suddenly turned and sprinted out of the gym, through the doors to the boys locker room. The teacher didn't even notice but his team were confused.

George immediately got up and followed, needing to make sure he was ok. He had no clue what was wrong.

But when George reached the locker room, he couldn't see anyone at all.

"Clay?" He called out. But there was no response. He walked around trying to figure out where he

went, or even which one was his locker.

But then he heard a snuffle which caught his attention, coming from near the showers. George jogged over and saw Clay was sitting in a corner, his hands pressed against his ears and silent tears rolling down his cheeks. George immediately went over to him, kneeling in front of the distressed boy.

"Clay? Clay." George said, but Clay couldn't hear him. George didn't know what to do. Clay was scarily quiet, just crying and shaking.

He reached out and put a hand over one of Clay's hands over his ear. The touch made him jump slightly at first, but George noticed his shoulders relax slightly at the contact.

"Clay? It's George." George said, slowly taking a hold of his hand and gently pulling it away from his ear. Clay nodded, but kept his eyes closed.

"What do you need? How do I help?" George asked, but there was no response. Clay's face was still scrunched in distress, still silent.

"Remember what you do for me? Can you copy my breathing?" George said, changing his sitting position so he was crossed-legged. He was still holding Clay's hand, but reached forward and grabbed the other one, also gently pulling it away from his ear.

George took some deep loud breaths, but Clay wasn't copying.

"Clay? Do I need to call someone?" George asked. He's never had to deal with this. He had no clue what was wrong or how to help. Clay shook his head.

"B-breathing doesn't... doesn't work... for me." Clay said.

"What works? Please tell me." George said, but Clay just let out a sob.

"Nothing. I'm not real. Nothing is real. You're not here. I don't know who I even am." He whispered.

"You are real. You're Clay. And you're ok. Look, you're here in the boys locker room at school, and I'm George, I'm right here in front of you. You're touching my hands. You're real." George said, trying to calm him down as he continued to sob.

"No. You're not here. No one cares. I can't feel your hands. I can't even feel *mine*." Clay said, shaking his head. George rubbed his own thumbs against his hands.

"I'm here. I care."

"Everyone hates me. He hates me." Clay said.

"No one hates you." George said.

"He does, he hates me. I ruined everything." Clay sobbed. George had no clue who he was talking about. "I tried not to think about it. I tried to p-pretend it never happened. But I-I told him... and I ruined it."

"Clay, count with me." George said. "One..." Clay shook his head.

"Doesn't work." He whispered. "God, I-I don't know what's going on. I don't know who I am. Who I *really* am. I can't feel my hands." He continued to cry. George held his hands tightly, trying to

figure out what to do.

"Then what can help?" George asked, desperate to stop Clay crying. Clay was squeezing his hands so tightly.

"Heartbeat." George was confused. "Can I hear your heartbeat?" Clay whispered. George nodded, even though the blonde still had his eyes closed. George shuffled over so he was sitting beside Clay.

Clay tugged George closer and leaned down to lay his head against his chest, gathering the material of George's shirt in his fist. His blonde mop of hair was pressed against George.

George carefully put one arm around Clay, and his other hand against the side of his head, holding the boy against his heart.

There was silence as Clay listened to George's heartbeat, and the brunette was taking very slow, purposeful breaths to make sure his heart wasn't racing. He ignored the thought of Clay in his hold, and instead tried thinking about other things so his heart doesn't speed up at the reminder that his crush was leaning against his chest.

"You're real." Clay whispered.

"Yes, so are you." George replied gently, still unsure of how to help. Clay moved his arms so he was hugging George around his middle, still keeping his head against his chest, still listening to his heartbeat which was definitely faster than usual.

They stayed like that for a few more minutes. George had relaxed in the hug, initially being tense. And he had subconsciously started playing with Clay's hair, running his hand through it and fiddling with the ends on the back of his neck. It was calming for the both of them.

"My mother used to do that a lot." Clay finally said, snapping George out of the action. "Playing with my hair. It got me to sleep." Clay said. He then let go and sat up, wiping his face before looking at George.

"Oh. I'm sorry." George said, putting both his hands into his lap, extremely awkward.

"What? No, it was nice. I-I'm the one who should be sorry. About all of that. That was kind of embarrassing." Clay said, leaning against the wall again and pulling his knees to his chest, taking a deep breath.

"Are you ok now?" George asked carefully. Clay hesitated, but nodded.

"Yeah. I'm really sorry you had to deal with that. I haven't had a panic attack that bad in a while." Clay said.

"Don't be sorry, it's not your fault. I'm glad I could help." George said. "Why was your panic attack so different to mine?"

Clay was staring straight ahead, like his mind was still somewhere else.

"Everyone is different. It's not like everyone goes through the same things, or has the same triggers, or even the same ways to calm down. I don't really know. You seem to have trouble breathing, like your dying. I can't feel my hands, it feels like I'm not real." He said, flexing his fingers.

"And slowing your breathing works for you. Probably since your issue is not being able to breathe. For me, hearing heartbeats works, I'm guessing because it reminds me I'm here and I'm real." Clay said, glancing down at George who nodded. "My mother figured that one out. I had my first panic attack when I was nine."

"Nine." George said in shock, receiving a nod in reply.

"Yeah."

They were silent for a bit longer, until Clay spoke again.

"Thank you for checking on me, and helping." He said, looking back at George. George smiled slightly awkwardly, scratching the back of his neck.

"Oh, yeah. No problem." He said. "Are.. um, you said everyone has different triggers. What set yours off? But you don't have to say!" George asked, immediately realising it was a bit of a personal question. Clay sighed.

"I was just... thinking about things. Just a few issues. It led to me questioning if this was the real me or not. And yeah... I don't know. I couldn't feel my hands." Clay said, looking at them. "They still feel weird." George noticed they looked a bit shaky. "I've been on the verge of a panic attack all day, I could feel it. I tried to calm down myself during lunch but it wasn't really working. I was just waiting to snap, and I guess it happened during gym."

"Oh." George replied, not sure what else to say. "You said 'he hates me'. Who were you talking about?" He then asked, immediately regretting it again. Why does he keep asking personal questions?

Clay thought about it for a few seconds.

"Oh. Um. My father. Yeah, we had a fight. But everything is fine." Clay said, tapping his knees.

"Oh. I'm sorry."

"All good. Anyways. Thanks again for helping George. Sorry if I made you uncomfortable." Clay added. George shook his head.

"No, I'm glad I could help." He said, standing up with Clay. "Do you want to miss the rest of gym?" He asked. Clay nodded.

"Yeah. Plus, my doctor said I shouldn't do any sport yet until I'm fully healed in case I tear the stitches." Clay said. George stared at him.

"What were you doing then!" George said. Clay just shrugged in response, walking over to their bags.

"I didn't want to just sit on the side with my thoughts. I thought it would distract me." He sighed, grabbing his stuff from the locker.

"About the fight with your father...?"

"Um. Sort of. It's hard to explain." Clay said, as the pair walked out of the locker room and back into the school hallways.

"Well, if you ever want to share, I'll be here to listen." George said, and it made Clay smile

slightly.

"Thanks, George. That's means a lot. You're a really great friend." He said.

George felt a pang in his heart, but chose to ignore it. He had to move on.

He glanced at Clay and saw he was biting his lip in thought. Like he was about to say something. George decided to be quiet. Clay would share if he wants.

"Normally when something is bothering me or I'm upset, I try to distract myself and pretend that nothing is wrong. Like that time I got drunk because I was sad. But I've learnt that it's not really a good thing." Clay said, and George nodded.

"It makes sense why you'd want to pretend nothing is wrong. I think a lot of people do it. It saves yourself from feeling awful every second of the day." George said, also shoving down all the things he had to deal with.

"But it doesn't really stop it. It's always there in the back of my mind, ruining my day and my mood. And it just ends up feeling worse later." Clay said.

"I guess." George said, reflecting on how he stifles his problems too.

"But I think I've figured it out." Clay said. George looked at him. "I just have to solve my problems."

"What if some things can't be solved?" George asked quietly.

"Everything has a solution." Clay said, nodding like he was telling himself it. "And I am going to fix things."

"Fix things." George echoed. "How?"

"I don't know how yet. But I will."

## **CODE RED**

**Dream and GNotFound needed. Two supervillains**

### Chapter End Notes

CW// panic attack, derealisation, mention of pills

Ah I'm not that fond of this chapter, but hopefully it's ok. Man, this story is getting long. I'm surprised if you have stuck around to this point. <3



# We can't do this alone

## Chapter Summary

Dream and George fight two villains at once... while trying not to let their feelings and anger get the best of their teamwork

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### CODE RED

**Dream and GNotFound needed. Two supervillains**

"Oh my God." George said, staring at the alert. Clay was also pale.

"Two?" Clay said.

"There's never been two before." George said, switching off his phone.

The school lockdown alarm started blaring through the halls, and Clay and George both looked at each other. Everyone else was already in classrooms.

"You two. In the classroom now." A teacher came down the hall, gesturing to a random classroom. George and Clay both nodded and went inside.

Of course, a sophomore english class. All the kids were at the back of the classroom on the floor already while the teacher was closing the windows. She turned to them and gestured to the back.

"Sit down at the back boys." She said. Clay and George both walked over.

"George!" A voice was heard, and George turned to see his sister. Lexi got up and ran to hug him. "What are you doing in here?"

"We weren't in a classroom." George said, and Lexi pulled him to sit next to her, with Clay following.

"Gogy. Good for you to join." Tommy said, grinning at George beside Tubbo.

"Of course you guys are here." George scoffed as they sat down.

"What's going on? It said two villains. How are there two villains?" Lexi said. George was nervously chewing on his lip.

"I don't know." He said.

"Everyone stay calm. You know the drill. If the school gets cleared, your parents can come pick you up. Otherwise you will have to stay until the superheroes defeat them." She said.

George and Clay both felt sick.

So sick that Clay got up and went over to the teacher.

"I'm going to throw up." He said, and he looked pale enough for it. The teacher's eyes went wide.

"Just take a seat, you'll be fine." She said. He shook his head. George was watching him, worried.

"No. I am about to. Can I go to the bathroom please." He said, rocking from side to side.

"No, it's a lockdown. Take a bin." She said.

Clay hesitated for a moment, but then bolted to the door and sprinted out of the room. The teacher yelled after him.

George took this as his opportunity too.

And he got up too, and ran to the door, but the teacher got in his way.

"Sit."

"But that's my friend, I need to make sure he's ok." George said.

"We are in a lockdown. You stay, I'll go get him." She said.

"Please let me." George said. She shook her head and pointed at him to sit back down. He groaned but turned back around to sit down with his sister.

The teacher left, and the second she did, George turned and sprinted out the door. He heard his sister call his name, and when he reached the hall, the teacher turned and saw him, yelling at him to get back inside.

But George just ran the other way.

"Clay!" George yelled through the hall, but the boy had already disappeared. Where could he have gone?

The teacher would find him, and get him back into a classroom. But George has to go. He has other things he needs to do. Clay would be fine.

George ran through the hallways, avoiding classroom windows and teachers. He had to get out. Eventually, he reached the exit which had somehow been opened even though he was positive a teacher would have locked it. But he ran out and left the school grounds.

Once he found somewhere, he ditched his bag and transformed, and then checked his phone to see if there was more information about where the villain, no, *villains* were.

He heard a scream come from above, and his head snapped up. In the distance, in the air, there was a car.

An entire car in the air.

George's jaw dropped and he immediately sprinted towards it. When he got closer, he saw there was someone inside. A woman in the front seat. She was screaming as the car moved in the air.

George got closer and she saw him, putting down the window.

"GNotFound! Help!"

"Stay calm. It's ok." He said. "I need you to open your door." He said. She looked at him like he was crazy. "And jump out. I'll catch you."

"Are you insane!"

"Trust me." He said. She nodded and then slowly opened the door, taking off her seatbelt. The car was wobbling in the air.

"Well this is entertaining." Another voice interrupted, and George looked to his right to see a villain in yellow, with a hand out toward the car. George looked back at the woman.

"Now. Quick." He said. But the villain laughed and suddenly the car started going higher in the air, making the girl scream.

"Jump!" George yelled, and she closed her eyes and obeyed, falling out of the car. He was actually slightly shocked at the trust she had in him.

George adjusted himself beneath her and caught her before she hit the floor, immediately turning back to look at the villain, who shrugged, and flicked his wrist.

The car went flying in another direction.

"I wasn't going to *kill* her. I was just having fun." The man in yellow said. George turned and ran with the woman, trying to find somewhere safer to put her.

"What did he do?"

"He was fighting Dream just before, but he can like pick things up with his mind or something. He picked up Dream and threw him. And then he saw me trying to drive away." She said. She was crying slightly.

George put her down near a random store.

"Thank you, GNotFound." She hugged him.

"No problem." He replied, separating from her and running back down the street, to where he saw the villain.

But he lost them. The yellow man had disappeared. George jogged through the empty streets to see where he might have gone.

He heard a crash, and immediately changed his direction, going up a building to get a better access point to wherever the villain was.

When he got on the roof, he saw a lamppost fly through the air, landing a few blocks away. Thank God the city was in lockdown.

He turned to where it came from and ran along the rooftops, eventually finding two men in yellow.

One was running and hiding behind various things like cars, dumpsters, even walls. But the other was moving every object out of the way, constantly coming closer.

Dream was trying his best not to get thrown again, but the villain was getting closer and he was running out of places to hide.

"Dream, Dream, Dream. GNotFound will be joining in a minute, don't worry. But you're more fun

to throw because you don't have a shield." The villain gloated.

Dream didn't respond, but dodged a car that was thrown near the alleyway he was currently hiding in. The villain was laughing as he got closer, and Dream didn't know where to go next.

Out of the corner of his eye, George saw something on another rooftop. This person was dressed in all white, and staring straight at Dream, with a stick of some sort, pointed right at him.

George ran along the roof to where Dream was, but the villain was about to shoot. Dream wasn't ready, he didn't know.

"Dream!" George called, but the villain shot their stick right at Dream. George did the first thing he could think of, and jump down in front of his partner, grabbing his arm.

"Shie-"

He got cut off by a force hitting his chest, which knocked him backwards into Dream and onto the floor. George groaned and held his chest, feeling dizzy from the impact.

"G!" He heard Dream say, and the next thing he knew, he had been picked up. He was too dizzy to comprehend what was happening, but Dream was carrying him away, running through the street, dodging the objects being thrown and the beams shot from above.

Somehow, Dream lost them by running through connected alleyways he knew well, and random convoluted streets.

When he gained enough distance, he ran into one narrow alley and put G on his feet, holding him up.

"Are you ok? What was that?" Dream asked, looking at his partner for any physical injuries.

"I'm alright. Was just dizzy for a moment. I'm fine now though." George said, pulling away from Dream and leaning against the wall. He still felt slightly winded from the impact, but was honestly not feeling that bad.

"What did you get shot with?"

"I don't know, Dream." George snapped.

Clay stared at him, feeling sick again.

"G, can we talk?" He asked desperately. George tensed his jaw and shook his head.

"Don't start now." George said through gritted teeth.

"I really need to apolo-"

"I said, don't fucking start, *Dream*." George said with bitterness laced in his words. He was mad. At everything Dream had said.

"Ok." Dream said softly.

George put a hand over his chest that still stung, his face contorted in pain.

"Are you feeling ok? What did the villain do to you?" Dream asked again, clearing his throat and changing the subject like he wanted.

"I don't know." George muttered. "But I feel fine now. We should go. We have two villains now, we can't waste our powers. We need to take both their jewels." George said, not looking at Dream.

"Ok." Dream said again.

"Let's go on the rooftops. We can see better there." George said.

"But..." Dream didn't want to say his opinion. He didn't want to make G more mad. He was rightfully upset, and Dream didn't want to ruin anything more.

"But what?" George asked, turning to look at him. Dream was going to say that there was less to hide behind on the roofs, but changed his mind.

"Nothing. Let's go." Dream said, and then ran back out of the alley, trying to find the best way to get to the roof.

"There they are." He heard a laugh, and turned to see the villain in white with her stick, pointing it at Dream. He dodged the beam and turned to run away with G.

"Dream." He heard G call out, and turned to see him running, but he was far behind, one hand over his chest. Dream stopped running.

"Come on!" Dream called to him, but George couldn't run any faster. He turned back to look at the white villain, who shot yet another beam at him. His eyes went wide, and he ran to the side, but tripped and landed on his back.

He tripped? How the hell did he trip?

"Useless." The villain laughed at George, who got up and snapped his bow. He aimed it up at the villain, and shot.

But nothing left his bow. He looked at it, and no arrow had appeared like usual. George looked up to see the telekinetic villain had also arrived in the street, and he held an arm out towards George.

He felt his feet leave the ground, as he was pulled into the air. He almost dropped his bow in the process, but snapped it back into a rubber band before he could.

"G!" He heard Dream call.

"What would happen if I throw him four blocks away?" The yellow villain cackled. George saw Dream pull out his sword and charge at the both of them, dodging beams.

"Do it." George spat the villain. "Throw me four blocks away. See what'll happen." He said.

"Oh. GNotFound thinks he's pretty good as a superhero." The white villain said, using her beams to keep Dream from getting closer. "Pity he wouldn't survive the fall."

George furrowed his eyebrows. The villain would only throw him a few blocks away. He could land it easy and not even hurt anything.

"Oh? He wouldn't?" The yellow villain teased, but with a smile on his face. They both know something George doesn't, and it's confusing him.

"No, he wouldn't." The white villain laughed. "He's basically a civilian at this point. My power is quite epic, perfect for a fight against superheroes." She said.

George went pale. That's why he couldn't summon an arrow, or run fast, or dodge easily.

She took his powers. That was what he was shot with. He was GNotFound without his powers.

It seems like the dots connected in Dream's head too. He looked up at George, and immediately stopped fighting the villain.

"So what if I just-" The telekinetic villain flicked his wrist slightly, and George felt his body lurch to the side. He yelled in fear. He wasn't that high up that it would kill him as a superhero. But without his powers... maybe he could get really injured.

"No, don't!" Dream said to the man.

"But I wanna see what would happen." He laughed, and then flicked his wrist again, this time letting go of George.

He screamed as his body was flung up into the air, plummeting to the ground so fast.

"Shield." George said, but nothing happened. He closed his eyes. "Shield. Shield. Shield." He repeated.

He braced himself for the impact of hitting the road. But it didn't come. Dream had caught him before he hit the ground. The sudden stop of momentum and collision of George into Dream definitely gave the brunette whiplash, and bruises. But it could have been worse.

George opened his eyes as Dream ran, holding him. George's breathing was shallow and he was shaking for some reason.

"Oh my God." George whispered, his arms tightening around Dream's neck. "Oh my God." He said again. He didn't have his powers. And he almost died.

"You're ok, G." Dream said softly, his heart also beating incredibly fast. He finally stopped and placed George on the ground.

"What just happened." George said in shock.

"Her power is removing other people's powers." Dream said, bending down next to George and checking him for injuries again. "Are you hurt?"

"So I'm useless." George said, ignoring Dream's question.

"Vulnerable." Dream said.

"You can't fight them both alone! We have never even fought two villains at once before, and now I can't even help you!" George said. Dream knew how bad the situation was.

"It'll be fine. You go home, I've got this."

"Go home? Are you insane."

"You'll just get hurt. I'll handle it, ok?" Dream said gently.

"There's two of them!" George said desperately.

"Trust me, I'll be fine." Dream said.

"Trust you?" George said, a bit of venom in his words. Dream furrowed his eyebrows.

"Don't you trust me?"

"I don't know. I don't know anymore! You always do the opposite of what you say." George said, crossing his arms over his chest and looking away.

"No I don't." Dream said, confused.

"You say you understand my plans, and then you go and do your own thing! You say you're here to help with the Mayor, and then you just stay quiet the whole time! Or you say you love me... and then say that no one can ever love me." George said, saying the last part much softer than the rest.

Clay frowned, hating himself even more.

"I was hurting."

"And so was I." George said, staring straight at him. He had tears in eyes but no one could see. The goggles were a blessing and a curse. "It's one thing to think that I'm unlovable, that I can't be emotionally available for anyone in my life, that I can't date anyone because of how messed up I am. And then it's another to hear those words from one of the most important people in my life. That no one could love me except for you. And you don't even know me enough to love me. It hurt." George said, angry at himself for being angry at Dream.

He knows Dream can't control his feelings. He knows how much courage it would have taken to say I love you. He knows that he hurt him when he said he loves someone else. But he can't help but be a bit angry.

"You were unfair." George whispered.

Clay looked down. He didn't want G to see his teary eyes.

"I was. I'm not good with my feelings. I've never loved anyone before. I was heartbroken, and my response was anger. I was upset that you weren't as hurt as I was. And I hurt you." Clay said, shaking his head. "Every part of my brain is telling me I can't love you. And you said you could never love me either. I didn't know what to do."

He looked up at G, pretending he was looking into his eyes.

"I knew you didn't feel the same."

"Then why say it at all?" George asked quietly.

"Because I didn't want to hide my feelings along with every other part of my life."

The two boys sat there, both painfully aware of the horrible timing for this conversation. And made even more obvious by the massive crash only a few streets away.

Having a serious conversation while fighting supervillains was somehow so fitting for the duo.

"You have to go." George said.

"But this is important." Clay said, not looking away.

"This city is important too."

"No it's not." Clay huffed.

"Dream." George said, tilting his head.

"I don't want to ruin this. Our friendship. Can we pretend I never said anything?" Clay asked desperately.

"I don't think either of us can do that."

"Then can we just... exist."

"Exist?" George repeated, and Clay nodded.

"Yes. Exist. This is a thing. It's complicated, and new, but can we just acknowledge it and roll with it? I needed more joke material anyway." Clay said. George shook his head, but with a small smile now on his face.

"That's not going to work, Dream."

"Can we make it work?" He asked desperately.

"So it's clear that I don't love you and don't want to date you." George said, wincing slightly at the harshness of his words.

"And it's clear that I love you and will continue to flirt with you." Clay said with a smile.

"I don't want to hurt you more, Dream." George sighed.

"And I don't want to stop loving you." Clay said. "I'm ok." He said with a reassuring smile, but a small amount of sadness seen in his eyes.

"I think we should have another conversation."

"Maybe."

"Just go, Dream." George said, pushing his arm to remind him of the two villains patrolling the streets.

"Are we ok?" Clay asked, as he stood up. George sighed.

"We'll be ok." He responded. Clay nodded, and turned to run, but George stopped him. "Wait!"

Dream turned back around.

"You really can't fight two villains alone. And I'm useless without my powers, we need help." George said.

"How will we get help?" He asked.

"We need the Liberator."

"But who are they?" Dream asked. George sighed and snapped his bow repeatedly while he thought.

"I don't know. They must have left some trail right? Like some way we can contact them." George said.



"Like what? We can't figure it out now, I have to go fight."

"There has to be something." George mumbled, now tapping his bow against his knee. His eyes caught the pretty carved patterns along the bow, and his fingers traced them.

"G, I really have to go." Dream said when they heard another crash.

"Wait." George said, standing up and staring at the pattern. "Give me your sword." He said. Dream obliged and held it out. George looked at the carving on the handle and his eyes went wide.

"What is it?" Dream asked.

"I have an idea." George said, handing back the sword and snapping his bow.

"Ok. I've got this, don't worry." Dream said.

"I'll be back. I'm getting us help." George said.

"How?"

"Just hold up the villains for half an hour. I'll be back, I swear."

"G-"

"Good luck Dream." George said, and turned around and ran away. Dream didn't follow, and George was relieved.

He had seen those markings before.

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There was a ding as George pushed open the door, him out of breath after running through the city, to his own house and now to here. He had detransformed before coming so he couldn't be tracked.

But there was no one in the store.

"Phil?" George called out, walking further in, still trying to catch his breath. He was holding something in his hand tightly.

After a few seconds, the man in question came out from the back of the store, his eyebrows furrowing when he saw George.

"George? There's a villain, you shouldn't be here. You should be in lockdown." He said, concerned. George shook his head and held out his hand.

There was a wooden box in his palm.

"This symbol." George said, taking a few pants, staring intently at Phil. "Do you know what it is?" He asked.

Phil looked at the box then back at George.

"It's a design for the store. Makes the gift boxes look nicer."

"You're lying, Phil." George said, putting the box down on the table. "Please. I can't ask it. Just tell me the truth. Please." George said.

"I don't know what you're talking about, George." Phil said calmly. George ran both hands down his face.

"Are you L?" George asked, his breaths being the only thing filling the silence that followed as the two males looked at each other. "Please. It's important. We are in trouble." George said, still not 100% certain of his hunch.

Phil took a deep breath, before nodding, defeated.

"Yes, George. I am- was the Liberator." He said. George let out a sigh of relief, and leaned against the cabinet beside him.

"I figured it out." He mumbled to himself.

"Come to the back, have some water." Phil said, gesturing for the exhausted boy to follow. George grabbed the box he had placed down and followed him.

They passed the storeroom and went into the break room, where Phil poured a glass of water for George, gesturing for him to sit on the sofa.

George did, staring at Phil.

"I'm so confused."

"I know you are." Phil said, handing him the drink and sitting across from him on a chair. "I bet you have a lot of questions."

"Yeah. I do." George said, his throat feeling like it was closing up. He cleared his throat and had a sip of water, before putting it down.

He wasn't sure why his eyes were tearing up. Most likely relief.

"Why did you do this to me?" George said softly, covering his face.

"I'm so sorry, George. I really, really am. For everything. I never knew how out of hand it was going to get. I shouldn't have given the responsibilities to teenagers." Phil said, feeling incredibly guilty.

"I'm sorry. I don't know why I even said that." George said, wiping his eyes and taking a deep breath.

"You have every right to be angry at me. Or frustrated. I put too much responsibility on such a young person. You and Dream." Phil said. George looked at the man.

"We can't talk about this now." George cleared his throat. "Dream's in trouble."

"What's happening? Why did you leave the fight?" Phil asked.

"One of the villains took away my powers. I can't even run fast, let alone summon my shield. We've never fought two before, and we can barely handle one. Dream's alone. And I'm useless." George said.

"Took your power? Achroite." Phil nodded.

"You know the jewel already?" George asked, shocked.

"I know almost every jewel and its power. But there shouldn't be two villains right now. I have no idea how Blade did it. That's not in his power, he can only do one at a time."

"You know what his power is?"

"Yes, but I can go into detail later. First we need to help Dream." Phil said, and stood up, gesturing for George to follow.

"Achroite's power is removing a person's ability to have powers. You can transform, but not use them. For any jewel." He said, as they walked down the hallway.

"What about when we take the jewel? Will I get my powers back?" George asked, terrified for the answer.

"I believe so. How most powers work is they have the effect on a person for as long as the holder wears the jewel. They can detransform and still influence you, but if they take off their jewellery, then it's gone. So that's why most things get fixed when you take off the villain's jewels." Phil said, and stopped at the end of the hallway, picking up the rug and folding it back, revealing a trapdoor beneath them.

"Ok... so I can't even wear another jewel right now to temporarily help Dream?" George said, watching Phil take off a necklace that had a key on his.

"No, you won't be able to use its power." Phil said, bending down to open the door. When it opened, it revealed stairs to a basement, and George followed him down, slightly nervous.

There was so much he wanted to talk to Phil about, and so many questions and worries. But he didn't have time right now. Dream needed his help.

In the basement was a really big safe, big enough for people inside. Phil went over to it, and then looked at George.

"I'm going to need you to turn around so you can't see the codes. It's for security. It's better if you don't know, so no one can get the information out of you." Phil said. George nodded and turned around.

He heard clicking for several seconds until the door creaked open and he turned back around. Phil went into the safe and George walked over and looked inside.

The walls were lined with boxes with labels on each of them. There were so many boxes.

"What is this?"

"Where I store the jewels. Although, most of them are empty." Phil sighed. George looked at the labels, and saw Moonstone. He furrowed his eyebrows pulled it off the shelf, opening it to reveal the bracelet that the wolf villain had.

"What! I thought I had it." George said, tracing a finger over the gem.

"Oh. Yeah, sorry about that. I swapped them out. It's just safer for them to stay here, all the ones you have are fakes." Phil said. George closed the box and put it back where he found it.

"Right." He said, turning to look where Phil was. There was a box much bigger than the rest, with yet another key hole. Phil used a different key to open this box, and sighed when he looked inside.

"Have a look." He said, handing the box to George.

Inside was separated into four corners, all with slightly different indentations where jewellery was meant to lie.

The only thing inside, in the bottom left corner of the box, was a clear white bracelet, with a label beneath it.

*Diamond*

George looked in the other segments of the box. *Sapphire* had an indent for his pendent. *Emerald* had an indent for a ring. And the fourth one... *Ruby* with an indent for an earring.

"These are four most precious gemstones. And the four most powerful jewels. Well, only one of them currently." He said.

"Blade has the Ruby?" George asked, and Phil nodded in response.

"I'll explain how at a later date. But right now you need to help Dream."

"But I can't wear the diamond, the powers won't work. Can you?" George asked. Phil shook his head.

"Again, I'll explain later. But I can't wear them anymore. I'm injured from last time."

"So how can I help Dream?"

"I'm going to get someone else to help." Phil said. George thought about what he meant for a second.

"Wait, are you're going to find a new person to give a jewel?" George said, immediately feeling sick at the idea.

"Temporarily. Just for this event. And then I am going to take it back. It's just to help you guys out."

"So they won't have to respond every time there's a villain? They won't have to ruin their life right?" George checked, making sure. Phil frowned but nodded.

"I'm sorry for what I did to you."

"Not now." George stopped him.

"But yes, only temporary." Phil said, clearing his throat.

"So do you have someone in mind? How will you give it to them?"

"Yes. Leave it to me, I'll get it to them. I have my ways." Phil said, grabbing an empty box from another shelf and carefully taking out the Diamond, placing it in the box.

"So what does the Diamond do?" George asked.

"The power of generation. You'll see what that means." He said.

"So what can I do to help? I can't just watch from afar. It'll kill me." George asked.

"Well, Dream's alone. And this new superhero will need your help. You have to go back, but be more passive. You won't heal until your powers return, so you need to be careful George."

"Ok." George nodded, eyeing the box with the Diamond. "You picked me and Dream, so I'm trusting you'll pick someone good."

"I've thought of someone who has shown similar qualities to the two of you. And is very trustworthy, and dependable. Also courageous, like the Diamond."

"The jewels have meanings?"

"Of course."

George looked around the small room. This was so much to process. He was barely able to wrap his head around the fact that Phil was L.

"Ok, I'm going to go back." George said.

"Ok. Also, George. Don't tell Dream who I am yet."

"What? Why?"

"It will cause some issues. You can only come speak to me as your civilian self. And Dream also knowing will just increase my chances of being discovered."

"Can I tell him I found you?"

"That's up to you. Go, George. I'll talk to you soon. I'm sorry about everything, I'll explain anything you want to ask later." Phil said.

George just nodded and left, going back up to the main part of the store and leaving.

Who was Phil going to give the Diamond to?  
And what power do they have that can help?

## Chapter End Notes

Ohoho it's getting interesting

Leave it to Dream and George to have a serious conversation while people's lives are at stake

## A new hero with an axe and bandana

### Chapter Summary

A new superhero joins Dream and George in the fight against the villains. But this new guy doesn't know what he's doing... and why is he so familiar?

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay was growing more and more tired. He had been thrown and tossed around too many times to count. The villains were playing with him at this point, toying with their food.

They were obviously delaying the inevitable, waiting for GNotFound to come back, since they had to get both their jewels.

Although Clay didn't want him to come back, he knew G would. And he knew he needed his help.

Clay was in the air, using his sword to deflect the beams of the white villain. While fighting, he came to the realisation that the telekinetic villain could only move one thing at a time.

"You're much more fun than GNotFound." The white villain yelled up at him, throwing a lazy shot at him which he deflected.

"Fuck off."

"He is so easy. Watch." The yellow one said, flicking his wrist and making Dream fling from side to side. He groaned. This was not fun.

"Is GNotFound coming back? Surely he's realised you're useless without him." She said. Clay closed his eyes for a second and shook his head.

"I think you'll find that we are actually a *team*." He replied.

"Well where is he then?"

"Well, if you hadn't taken away his powers, then he would be here right now. So really, your plan backfired and now the Blade will be angry at the both of you. Dumbasses." Clay said.

He watched both of their eyes change to death stare him. Maybe he shouldn't have pissed them off.

His body was dropped to the ground, and he groaned at the impact. But then his sword was ripped away from him, and when he tried to get up to run to it, his body wouldn't move. The telekinetic villain was holding him still.

"I'm sick of him. Take his powers for real this time." He ordered the women. She grinned and pointed the stick at him. Clay tried to move, but could only move his hands.

He closed his eyes, waiting for the impact, but when he heard the beam shoot, he heard someone else yell. Clay snapped open his eyes to see G in front of him on the ground.

"G!" Clay yelled. In the confusion of what just happened, the yellow villain let go of Clay, and he immediately picked up G and started running. He didn't get far, until he was lifted into the air again, still holding G.

"So he did return." The villain yelled. Clay looked around, trying to figure out what to do. He didn't have his sword, and G couldn't use his shield.

They were screwed.

"G are you ok?" Clay asked, holding him tightly so he wouldn't drop him.

"Yeah." He whispered, but from what Clay could see of his face, it was scrunched in pain from being shot again.

"Drop us your jewels now, or I will take GNotFound out of your hold and launch him across the city.

"I said you would get hurt! Did you get help?" Clay asked G, ignoring the villains for a second.

"I think so."

"You think so?!" Clay responded. He looked back down at the villains staring up at them. The white one pointed her stick at him.

"If you shoot me I will eat my ring." He yelled down at them. She faltered with her stick, looking at her villain partner in confusion.

"That won't taste good." G giggled, his head lolling to the side.

"G, are you good?"

"In a minute." He sighed, resting his head against Clay's chest. Clay felt a small blush creep onto his face, but he shook his head to snap out of it. They still haven't sorted things out. It's clear G is still upset about what he said.

"You have five seconds to take off GNotFound's pendent and your ring and drop them."

Clay looked down at them. He had no plan. His mind was running through all the possibilities but nothing seemed to work out. If he didn't take off their jewels, then the telekinetic villain will take G out of his hold and launch him. He might not get there in time, and the fall could kill him.

G was usually the one with the plan.

" 5..." The villain called out. Clay decided the best idea was to use his power. It may not do anything, but his goal was to summon his doppelgänger and maybe it will distract the telekinetic villain enough for him to drop them.

He took a deep breath and held G tighter.

"4... 3... 2..."

He never reached 1. Because out of nowhere, there was a battle cry from the ground, and someone came swinging at the yellow villain with an axe.

Clay looked down in shock. He couldn't see well from here, but whatever the person did, it made the villain let go of Clay.

He fell to the ground, holding G's head to protect him just in case. Clay didn't even have enough time to process whatever fight was going on, he immediately turned and sprinted with G, placing him down a street away.

"Stay here." He told the boy, who was still in pain from the hit, and then ran back to the fight.

When he came back, he was met with both villains being fought by a guy. His suit was white on the torso and legs, but black sleeves extending to cover his arms, along with the black material on his feet and neck. On his chest was a flame, and in his hands was an axe, with a long wooden handle and an iron blade. The material stopped after his neck, his hair was visible, black and dark and spiking up in every which way, and with a white bandana tied around his head, keeping it out of his eyes. Covering the bottom half of his face was a white face mask. His eyes, like Dream's, were also visible.

And on his wrist, was a bracelet with a glistening jewel.

Clay's first terrified thought was that it was another villain. *Three*. But as he watched the fight for a few seconds, he assumed the new person was on his side. This must be the help G said.

*Was this... the Liberator?*

The guy with the black hair turned to Dream, swinging his axe to deflect the beams.

"Dream! Oh my God." He yelled from behind his mask, his excitement clearly seen in his eyes. Clay stood there in confusion. "Do you think I could possibly get some help?" He asked, as his axe was ripped from his grip, and he was pushed backwards by the telekinetic guy.

Clay ran and scooped up his sword from earlier off the ground, and sprinted forward, running in front of the guy, deflecting the beam shot at the same moment.

"Who the hell are you?" Clay yelled, as he continued deflecting the beams and walking backwards.

"I'm... um... excellent question... AH!" The guy was lifted into the sky. Clay ran forward at the telekinetic villain with his sword, but was almost shot by the woman in the process.

"Do you know what you're doing?" Clay yelled up at him.

"Take their jewels or somethi- AH!" He was thrown into the building beside them.

He was definitely not the Liberator.

"Who the fuck is this?" The yellow villain said, glaring over at the newcomer.

"And who the fuck are you? Pussy!" He responded, jumping back onto his feet. Clay smiled slightly. He liked this guy's enthusiasm.

"Now it's an even fight." Clay said, flipping his sword and pointing it at the two villains.

"Actually, a uneven fight." A voice came from his left. G was back, holding his arrow-less bow.

"Fuck yeah!" The new guy said, coming back and standing beside G, holding out the axe.

"G! Go away!" Clay yelled, and in the split second he was distracted, the telekinetic villain lifted Clay in the air. He groaned in frustration.

"Dream, you keep the telekinetic villain preoccupied. Newbie, get the woman's in white's stick." G



said, ignoring Clay.

"Anything for you GNotFound." The guy winked, giving G a pat on the shoulder and charging forward. Clay clenched his jaw. He wasn't sure if he liked this kid or not now.

He was dropped, and landed on his back, sighing as it was the fiftieth time. G ran to him and helped him to his feet.

"Go hide, G." Clay said. G shook his head.

"I'm not leaving. I don't need my powers to help. The strategy is this-" He said, but a beam was shot at him, which Clay had to lean forward to deflect.

"You kind of do need powers." Clay said.

"Oh shit!" He heard a yell, and Clay turned to see the new guy fall from a high height, landing and then getting up and picking up his axe again.

But then there was a yell from behind him and Clay turned to see G was up in the air once again.

"G, this is why I said to hide! You're just making things more difficult." Dream yelled up at him, holding his sword tighter.

"Don't move Dream." The yellow villain said. Clay turned and saw the new guy was somehow pinned to the ground, on his stomach, his own axe against the back of his neck by the woman.

Clay looked around and saw in the distance the white stick. *No fucking way the new guy actually got it away from her.*

"Give us your jewel, Dream. Or I will throw G far away and kill this new kid." The yellow guy said. Clay looked up at G, who was being moved around in the air.

"Don't you dare drop him." Clay said through gritted teeth.

"Give us your jewel. I know you want them both alive." He said, holding out his free hand. Clay looked to see the newbie still pinned to the ground, but he made eye contact with him.

"Dream, don't. I got this." He said. Clay narrowed his eyes. What could he possibly do?

"You're pinned to the ground idiot. Give me your wrist." The woman said, reaching for the bracelet on his wrist.

But the guy just laughed.

"Bolt!" He yelled. And then there was a massive crack in the sky, almost deafening. Through the clouds, a massive lightning bolt struck down in the middle of all of them, making the ground beneath them crack and shake.

The villain in yellow was closest, and he fell over from the shock of the lightning bolt. In the confusion, he dropped G who screamed as he suddenly fell.

Clay sprinted and caught him once again before he hit the ground, placing him on his feet and turning back around.

In the commotion, the lightning bolt guy had somehow flipped and was now the one pinning the woman to the ground, the axe beside them.

"It's in her necklace!" G yelled, running over to them both and leaving Clay, who noticed the yellow villain stand up again and glare at G.

The villain reached a hand out and picked G up with his power, throwing the blue hero into the side of a building. Clay yelled in horror as G crumpled at the bottom of it, not moving.

He turned to see the woman's necklace get ripped off and she transformed back, and the new guy jumped up, turning to face the yellow guy.

"Dream, go to him!" The new guy yelled, holding his axe menacingly, and Clay nodded, ignoring the villain and running over to G.

He fell to his knees beside him and pulled the boy into his lap. G was unconscious, but breathing. But there was blood soaking through the dark hair on the back of his head.

"G. G! Get up!" Clay said, shaking him. But there was no response.

The woman's jewel was taken. Shouldn't he have his powers back? Shouldn't he be healing?

Clay held the sides of G's face.

"Heal. Please." He said, tears filling his eyes out of fear. He didn't know what to do. He has to be healing. But he couldn't tell.

Clay looked back over at the fight, seeing the guy up in the air while the telekinetic villain flung him around in anger.

He felt movement and immediately looked back down to see G grab his arm.

"G?" Clay asked, grabbing his face again. G smiled.

"Hey Dream."

"Fucking hell. You scared me." Clay said, letting go and laughing slightly in shock, resting his hands on the back of his own neck, watching as G sat up.

"Oh shit." George said, immediately jumping up and running back over to the fight, his super speed back, but he wasn't even completely healed. His head still oozing blood, his hair sticking to his head. Dream also got up and followed, in an attempt to stop him so he could heal.

The new guy was on the ground, groaning, and the telekinetic guy was moving a car over to him. George ran and dove at the guy in the floor, grabbing his arm.

"Shield!" He yelled, at the same time the car was dropped.

His blue shield surrounded them both, and the car fell to the side of it.

"Holy fuck." The black-haired guy said, looking at the shield surrounding them. George didn't have time to talk with him, he stood up, pulling the boy to his feet, and turned back to the villain, who looked at the three of them in slight fear.

George snapped his bow and materialised an arrow, dropping his shield at the same time he shot it. The villain stopped it with his telekinesis before it hit him, but didn't have time to process that Dream was running at him, and he was tackled to the floor.

Before the villain could use his telekinesis on anything else, Dream pulled the ring off the man's

finger and he detransformed.

As soon as he did, George let out a massive sigh of relief and sat down on the ground where he was, still insanely dizzy. Dream got off the man, and was also catching his breath. They were all silent for a moment.

"Holy. Fucking. Shit. That was fucking insane. Oh my God this is the best day of my life! Holy shit." George and Dream both looked at the new guy who was laughing.

The sounds of sirens grew closer, so Dream stood up and jogged over to G, putting a hand on the back of his head.

"You're healing, right?" He asked, and G nodded, letting him help him to his feet. When he got up, George held out his hand to the new kid.

"I'm GNotFound. Thank you so much for your help." The guy squealed slightly and shook it.

"Of fucking course, GNotFound. It was an honour." He said, and turned to Dream, also holding out his hand.

"I'm Dream." Dream said, shaking it.

"I know! Fuck. That was insane. How do you guys do that, like, every day?" He asked, looking around and seeing the destruction. The ground of the city centre was entirely ruined and torn up from his lightning bolt.

"Your power is a thunderbolt?" Dream asked, and the boy nodded. The power of Generation, as Phil had told George. At the same moment, they all saw his bracelet flash twice.

"What does two flashes mean again?" He asked.

"You have five minutes left before you transform." George said.

"Wait, can someone please explain to me what the hell is going on? Like who are you? G, how did you get this help?" Dream said, sick of waiting for the explanation.

"It's temporary. He's giving his jewel back after this fight. We just needed the help once." George explained.

"So you won't be here every fight?" Dream asked looking at him.

"Sadly not." The boy said with a sigh, touching his bracelet.

"Trust me, it's for the better." George said, just as a bunch of vehicles arrived. Paramedics went to the two dazed civilians who were once villains, while reporters came running over to the three of them. George saw the fear in the new guy's eyes as they approached.

"What's your name? Your superhero name." George quickly asked. The boy panicked.

"Oh. Shit. Umm." He paused for a second, and then looked up out of the corner of his eye as if he was trying to think.

"Sadnap." He said. George stared at him and Dream snorted.

"You have one chance for a name. Don't do what I did and panic. *Sad nap*. Come on, man. Quick. Think of something less sad." George said.

The reporters arrived, and shoved microphones into all three of their faces.

"How were there two villains?"

"Is this a new superhero?"

"What's your name?"

"Where did you go GNotFound?"

"Ok, we only have a minute and then we have to go." George yelled over them, making them stop. He turned to the new guy.

"Introduce yourself." He said, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Hi. I'm Sapnap." He said, waving nervously. George nodded, approving of the name, even if it was a bit random.

"He helped us out for this fight because we've never fought two villains before. And one of them took my powers. We might see him again, but only if we need the extra hands. He did really well for his first time, and being thrown straight into the deep end." George said with a smile.

"We all should probably go now, and GNotFound is still healing." Dream said, watching George carefully.

The three all waved goodbye to the reporters and ran off, stopping far from the scene and out of sight.

"You know how to give your jewel back?" George asked Sapnap. He nodded.

"Yep. Also it was so cool meeting you guys. I'm a big fan." He said, and then jumped and hugged George, who was taken by surprise, but hugged back.

*Why... why is this hug so familiar*

"We will see you around Sapnap." Dream said, watching them both pull away from the hug. He couldn't deny that he felt a little jealous.

"Bye!" He said cheerfully, and then ran away. George chuckled, and his pendent flashed twice, signalling he had five minutes now too.

"He did quite well for his first time." He said, turning to Dream, who had his arms crossed against his chest.

"Can you explain to me how he got the jewel? Did you figure out who L is? Did you speak to them?" Dream asked. George hesitated. He really didn't want to lie to his friend.

"Yeah, I figured it out. I didn't have much time to chat with L but he gave us Sapnap. Weird name by the way." He chuckled.

"Well? Who is it? Who is L?" Dream asked eagerly. George bit his lip.

"I can't tell you." He said softly. Dream frowned and dropped his arms.

"What do you mean you can't tell me?"

"He asked me not to. Said too many people knowing increases his chances of being found." George said.

"But I'm *Dream*! If anyone should know, it's both of us." Dream said, frustrated.

"I know, but he asked me not to."

"Does he not trust me?" Dream said. George took a step forward, but Dream stepped back.

"Well-"

"Neither of you trust me." Dream said, crossing his arms over his chest. The hurt in his voice was impossible to miss.

"Of course I trust you." George said with a frown.

"That's not what you said two hours ago. You literally said you don't trust me because I do the opposite of what I say. I get that I might have ruined things between us, but you could at least tell me the name of the person who gave me this!" Dream said, holding up his ring.

"Dream, I'm just doing what he said. I haven't even spoken to him yet. Let me have a conversation with him first, and I'll see if you can meet him too." George said.

"What am I? Your sidekick? I thought we were a *team*." Dream said, growing more and more frustrated.

"We are." George said softly.

"Why am I not apart of this?"

"I don't know. Let me figure out everything first and then I'll tell you." George said. Dream took another step away, shaking his head.

"You won't tell me. You don't trust me enough."

"I was angry when I said that." George said, looking down.

"And I was angry when I said no one else loves you! It's the same thing!" Dream yelled.

The two boys stood there for another minute, both staring at each other, both frustrated and angry and guilty.

George's pendent started flashing rapidly.

"You have to go." Dream scoffed.

"Wait, we can't leave it like this again. Why do we keep fighting?" George asked, standing his ground.

"Because we both make dumb decisions. And say stupid things when we are angry. And you don't trust me as much as I trust you. Or love me as much."

George frowned again.

"You know I can't help who I love."

"That wasn't even my main fucking point, G!" Dream yelled. He made a sound of frustration, a scream through his teeth. "God. Even when you're being an idiot, even when you lie to me, or hide things from me, or admit you don't trust me, I can't help but love you. What the hell is wrong with

me? What the hell is wrong with you. Why am I like this?" Dream said, putting his hands on his head to calm down.

George stood there, practically speechless. Dream looked at him and glanced down at the still flashing pendent.

"Have fun talking to L. Tell him I say thanks." Dream scoffed, turning and walking away.

"Dream, can we talk later?" George called out, but Dream ignored him, still walking away. George groaned and turned and ran so he was in a more hidden area, and detransformed.

He sat down on the floor of the hidden alleyway, immediately putting a hand on the back of his head which was throbbing immensely. He winced at the pain. He hadn't fully healed.

He stayed there for a while, trying to gather his thoughts. He had to get up, he needed to go find his school bag, and then he needed to talk to Phil. But he also needed to see his family, who must be confused on where he was. And he needed to check on Clay since he was feeling sick. Plus his biology assignment was due in a few days, and the coding one too. He also needed to sleep.

There was so much to do, so George just stayed in the empty alley.

He stayed there for another hour or two.  
And if he was crying,  
well,  
that was nobody's business.

•

"George!" A voice called as soon as he walked through the door, and a body ran at him, hugging him. He hugged Lexi back, resting his head on her shoulder.

"George? Oh my God." His mother said, also arriving.

"What?" George asked with a yawn as Lexi pulled away.

"You ran out of the classroom at school! And then we heard nothing from you for almost five hours. It's dark outside!" Lexi said. Lorna pushed forward and grabbed George's hand pulling him into the house.

"Honey are you alright?" She asked. He nodded and she got him to sit down on the couch. His head was still killing him. He really should have healed first.

"Where did you go." Lexi asked. Lorna gave Lexi a look.

"It's alright, Lex. I'll talk to him." She said. Lexi huffed and left, muttering something along the lines of she wasn't even that worried anyways.

"George, sweetie, where'd you go?" Lorna asked, sitting next to her son who let his head fall against her shoulder.

"My friend Clay was sick, so I was with him during the lockdown. And then afterwards, I took him home." George said.

"It took you that long to get to his house?" She asked, and George nodded.

"Yeah, I stayed for a bit longer, plus he lives in the Mayor's mansion. It's far from the school and

we walked."

"Doesn't he get picked up?"

"Um. Yeah. But the fresh air was good for him." George said, well aware of his shit lie.

"Are you lying?"

"Maybe." He said, letting his eyes flutter shut. Lorna sighed and ran a hand through his hair, but she stopped.

"What happened to your head? There's a bump." She said, pushing his hair to look better. George groaned, trying to pull away. "George, did you hit your head?"

"I'm fine. Tripped at school." He said. She sighed.

"Do you want some ice?" She asked. George shook his head in response, suppressing the wince on his face.

"What were you and Clay actually doing?" She asked. George hummed.

"Playing minecraft." He said. Lorna chuckled.

"That makes more sense. Next time can you text me though? You had the both of us worried. I almost called your father." She said. George nodded.

"Sorry Mom." He mumbled. She got up and moved George's head so he was lying down on the couch. His head was throbbing and everything was spinning.

"I'll make you some dinner and then you can get some sleep, ok?" She asked. He sighed and nodded.

He rested his eyes for half an hour, while his mother made him dinner. When she returned, she got him to sit up and eat the pizza. She made one for his sister too.

George felt so exhausted. His head was killing him, and he felt like all his limbs weighed doubled they amount they usually do. He could barely eat the pizza, he could barely even hold a conversation with his mother.

"You seem wrecked, George. I'll grab you your pills and then you can get some rest." She said, taking away the food he barely touched. George just hummed, hugging the pillow next to him and closing his eyes.

She came back with the two pills and water, shaking his shoulder.

He popped the pills into his mouth and swallowed them down with water.

It took George approximately 30 seconds to realise what he had done. By that time, his mother had already got him to his room, and she kissed him on the forehead

"Night, George." She said, and left the room.

George's eyes went wide when he realised, and he immediately coughed at the thought. He swallowed them. He actually swallowed them.

It said it would take 30 minutes to come into effect. So why did he already feel heavy? Or was that

from before?

George left his room and ran down the stairs.

"George?" His mother asked, standing in front of him.

"I don't want them. I don't want to take them." He said, tears pooling in his eyes. Lorna put an arm around his shoulders and tried to turn him back around.

"No. Mom please." He sobbed.

"George, it's alright. You've taken them before. You'll get to sleep soon and I'll wake you up for school. It's ok, nothing bad is going to happen."

"No. You don't understand! I can't sleep. I'm not going to bed." He said.

His head was so heavy from the day. He wasn't even sure if the pills had come into affect or if he was always this exhausted and dizzy and nauseous and heavy.

"Just go to your room and lie down-"

"No! No, I'm not!" He said, and pulled out of her grip, running to the front door of the house and running outside.

"George!" He heard his mother call, but he didn't look back, he stared at his feet as he ran down the street.

He needed to get out of his house, away from his bed. He couldn't sleep. He couldn't. Running would keep him awake.

Until he ran straight into something.

He looked up at the white smiley face mask, and jumped in surprise. Dream looked concerned.

"George?" He said. George shook his head.

"I don't want to sleep." He said, taking a step back from the hero.

Clay had flashbacks to the day at the ER, when tired and delusional George ran straight into him, begging him not to let him sleep.

George stumbled over his own feet, and Clay caught him by his forearms.

"Hey, hey. It's ok." Clay said, putting an arm around George and turning him back around, walking him back home.

"I took them. I didn't mean to. I was too tired to realise." George sobbed. Clay looked at his house and saw Lorna standing out the front, a hand over her chest.

"Took them?" Clay asked.

"The pills. I accidentally took them." George sobbed, leaning against Clay with his eyes closed.

Oh. The sleeping pills he admitted to not taking.

"Do you want to sit on the roof with me for a bit?" Dream asked gently. George looked up at him,



tears in his eyes.

"What?"

"I can keep you awake, and protect you." He said. George wiped his face but nodded.

They reached the house and Lorna looked very concerned and confused.

"I'll meet you up there, ok?" Dream whispered. George nodded and walked inside, past Lorna who watched her son with concern. She turned back around to Clay.

"Dream? What-"

"Sorry to disturb you ma'am. I was in the area. He seemed quite distressed. I believe I've met you at the supermarket once." Clay said. Lorna nodded.

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry about him. He has insomnia and is still getting used to the medication. He sometimes freaks out when he gets anxious. And he's utterly exhausted so he's a bit out of it-" She said.

"No need to explain." Clay said with a kind smile. "Have a good night." He said. Lorna thanked him again and shut the door.

Clay walked away from the house and looked into George's window, where he could see the boy lying down in the bed. His mother walked in to see him asleep, and she then left.

Clay went to the side of the house and carefully jumped up onto the roof.

Why was he in the area?

He didn't want to go home yet. He had been walking around the city for hours, just wanting to be alone with his thoughts. Not wanting to go back to reality.

Did he come here to talk to George?

Maybe.

He saw the brunette try to climb onto the roof a few minutes later, and Clay chuckled and helped him up. George stumbled slightly as he regained his balance.

"S-sorry." He said. Clay smiled and sat down with him.

"That's ok. Are you alright now?" He asked. George shook his head.

"I'm not allowing myself to sleep." He said, digging his fingernails into his knees. Clay reached forward and gently grabbed his hands, pulling them away from him.

"It's ok, George."

"I can't sleep." George said.

"Why not?" Clay asked. George just shook his head.

"I have things I need to do. So much to do." George said, swaying slightly.

"Like what? Tell me." Clay said, rubbing the knuckles of George's hands. He could see how tired the boy was getting. His eyelids were dropping every time he blinked.

"I have assignments."

"You can do them tomorrow."

"I have to ask... my Dad... some questions." George said.

"You can also do that tomorrow."

"And I need to message Clay!" George said, as if just remembering. He reached into his pocket for his phone, pulling it out.

Clay furrowed his eyebrows.

"W-why?" He asked.

"He was sick." George mumbled, going to his contact. "I don't know where he went and haven't checked if he's ok. Plus he was really sad all day and I don't know how to help."

Clay couldn't help but smile slightly. George cared. He left George at school, literally ran away from him, but he still cared.

"I'm sure he's fine. You... you can message him tomorrow." Clay said.

"What if I'm dead tomorrow." George said, and then lowered his arms, the messages still up on his phone, but too exhausted to text. He leaned against Clay. "My head hurts so bad."

Clay chuckled and took the phone from him, switching it off and carefully putting it back into the front pocket of George's hoodie.

"You won't be dead tomorrow." Clay said, putting an arm around the boy, and rubbing his arm. George hummed.

"What if I die and I end on a bad note with you." He said, closing his eyes and pressing more against Clay.

"Bad note with... me?" Clay asked in confusion.

"No." George shook his head. "I misspoke. George doesn't have any issues with Dream." He said. Clay stared down at George, extremely confused.

"Who would you on a bad note with?"

"A friend." George sighed. "I'm an idiot."

"You're not an idiot." Clay said, leaning his head against George's too.

"I'm sleepy." George mumbled, pulling his knees to his chest.

"You are." Clay smiled.

"I'm not sleeping though." George said, opening his eyes again.

"Of course not." Clay chuckled, still rubbing his arm.

George sighed. His whole body was growing heavier, but he refused to sleep. He refused to give in to what his body wants.

"My head hurts." He whined, closing his eyes and pressing his forehead against Clay. Clay put a hand on the top of his head.

"That's because you're very tired Georgie."

"Shut up." He muttered, and Clay let out a small wheeze. George smiled, still with his eyes closed.

"I like your laugh a lot, Dream." He mumbled.

"You do?" He asked, and George hummed a yes in response.

"Are you tired too?" George asked, lifting his head and opening his eyes slightly to look at Dream. Clay chuckled. George's mind was clearly all over the place. It must be the meds.

"I am a bit, yeah. Had a long day."

"I know." George said, closing his eyes again and leaning his head back against him. "Are you going to sleep?"

"Probably when I get home."

"What if there's a supervillain in the night?"

"I have my phone on loud if there's an alert. It usually wakes me up." He said.

"It won't wake me up." George said, frowning.

"That's ok, you don't need to wake up for it." Clay said.

"Yes. What if I'm in danger, or my family is in danger?" George said.

"Well, then I'll be here to save you." Clay said, pushing a strand of hair that had fallen in front of George's face out of his eyes.

"Really?" George smiled slightly.

"Of course."

"Thank you, Dream." George whispered.

They stayed like that for several more minutes, until Clay had convinced himself that George had fallen asleep. He carefully picked the boy up, and manoeuvred himself to climb back into George's window while holding him. It took a great amount of skill, but he managed it.

He gently put George down in his bed, and pulled the blanket over him.

"Night Georgie." Clay whispered, and was going to leave, but something grabbed his arm, and he turned back around.

"Dream... I'm sorry." George mumbled.

"Why?"

"I'm not very nice to you." He said. Clay frowned and bent down slightly to run a hand through the boy's hair.

"You are one of the nicest people to me." Clay said, meaning every word. George shook his head.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry, Georgie. There's nothing to be sorry about." Clay smiled, patting his hair once more before standing back upright.

George didn't say anything more, so Clay left.

He walked all the way home, recalling everything that occurred today. He was exhausted, that's for sure. And still upset with G. He had come to terms with the fact that they could never be more than partners, more than friends. But the fact that G wouldn't tell him who the Liberator was, hurt.

They were a team. But apparently Dream wasn't important enough for G to even advocate for. Apparently L said no. But that hurt even more. Clay wanted nothing more than to thank the person that gave him this escape. But he wasn't trusted enough.

At least George cared enough to check on him.

## Chapter End Notes

CW// medication

Three chapters based on the same day?

Don't mind me.

Also Sapnap pog. I've been waiting to add him for so long

Twitter: Lottiarat

# I can't visit you anymore

## Chapter Summary

Dream saving his close friend in a supervillain fight doesn't go as planned.

## Chapter Notes

TW// homophobia, homophobic slur (censored)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Shouldn't you be in school?" Phil asked as George followed him to the back. George nodded, and Phil took a seat, but he remained standing.

"I couldn't wait longer to talk to you." George explained. Phil gestured for him to sit too, but George shook his head. "I won't be here long."

"But we have a lot to discuss. I'm sure you have lots of questions." Phil said, slightly confused.

"I think Dream should know too. It feels wrong doing this without him. He's my partner, one of my friends." George said. Phil sighed.

"Please take a seat, George." He said. George obliged and finally sat down. "Look, it's not that I don't trust Dream. It will just make things more complicated. I would have preferred you didn't find out either."

"Good thing I did. We might not have defeated the two villains yesterday." George snapped. "I'm more confused as to why you were in hiding from us in the first place. Things could have been so much easier if we knew who you were earlier." George said.

"I know, but I have to be in hiding. The Blade is after me. It all started-"

"No. Stop. I really do want to know, and I have so many questions. But I can't do this without Dream. He's my partner. Hell, he's my friend. He deserves to be here." George said.

Phil stared at him.

"We've *earned* this explanation." George said, a fiery stare back at him. Phil smiled slightly.

"The two of you work well together."

"I know." George replied, with his chin raised slightly. Phil sighed.

"Ok. I agree. I will speak to the both of you and answer any questions you like." He said. George sighed in relief.

"Thank you."

"But under a few conditions. The both of you have to still be in superhero form so you don't know the other's identity. But neither of you can arrive as your superhero selves."

"How will that work?" George asked.

"The next time you see Dream, you give him this address and the time. But he will arrive half an hour after you. That way you do not see each other." He said.

"Ok... I guess that can work." George said, nodding.

"Alright." Phil said. "I admire your loyalty to him by the way, George. I never realised how close the two of you would get." Phil stood up. George also stood up, putting his hands in his pockets.

"That's what happens when you put two kids together in life or death situations hundreds of times a year. We spend more time with each other than with our other friends." George said, not hiding his cold stare. Phil sighed again.

"Is there anything you wanted to ask me now? Before we meet with Dream too?" He asked.

George chewed on his lip in thought. He did have one question.

"Why me?" He asked, his tone softer than before. "Why did you choose me for the Sapphire?"

"I'm not sure if you remember, but there was a specific event. It was just over a year ago. It was around the time my son, Tommy started sitting with you and your friends. And also when there was only like one villain a month." Phil started.

*"See you George." Nick called out, waving goodbye as he stepped into his car. George gave a half wave back, before sitting down on the bench waiting for his Mom to come pick him up.*

*"Aw, pleeeeee Phil." He heard a voice yell from nearby. George looked up to see the blonde kid that had stolen his seat today at lunch leaning against the driver side window of a car.*

*"Tubbo can come over tomorrow. Not today." A man replied. The blonde kid groaned and stepped away from the car.*

*"Well I'm going over to his house today then." He huffed. Phil gave him a look.*

*"No you're not. Get in the car."*

*"But Philll."*

*"Tommy."*

*"Fuck you." The kid said, and started walking away. George raised his eyebrows. He would never say that to his father.*

*There was a sudden loud crack, and George looked up to see a massive tree started falling. Above the tree was a person flying. George's eyes went wide. A villain.*

*The tree was falling, going to land right where the blonde kid was walking. Phil saw and yelled his name, making the kid stop and turn around.*

*George jumped up and sprinted at him, and then shoved him out of the way, just as the tree landed*

*with a loud thud.*

*George looked up to the flying villain, which threw a hand out toward another tree, also making it crumple and fall.*

*George jumped up, pulling the annoying teenager to his feet and taking him to his car, where his father had gotten out of.*

*"It's a villain. Go." George said, practically pushing the boy into Phil. Tommy scrambled to get into the car, and George turned to see if his sister had come out of the school yet. Everyone was screaming and running away, but he could see Lexi in the distance.*

"Yeah, of course I remember that." George said.

"You went out of your way to save Tommy. And then instead of hiding you ran over to a young girl."

"My sister."

"Yes. Your first thought was to look out for everyone else. Even an annoying freshman who stole your seat and I'm guessing cussed at you." Phil said. George was quiet for a moment.

"You gave me the Sapphire because of that one event?" George asked.

"Yeah. I suppose so. I didn't need much more proof than that. You were everything the Sapphire stood for."

"How could you have been so sure of that after that singular event? I'm not the only person who would save others." George said with furrowed eyebrows.

"My instincts aren't wrong. I chose well, did I not? You and Dream are perfect."

"I think you chose the first two teenagers who weren't your own kids that showed an ounce of human decency and then they grew into their roles. I think we became our jewels once we got them. We weren't fit for them before, we had to grow up. We had to fill the massive shoes you gave us." George said, crossing his arms over his chest.

Phil was silent for a moment.

"I suppose to some extent you did have to change. But I saw the ability of the two of you to grow into this role. I saw the opportunity."

"You're talking about us like we are investments. You sound like Mayor Block." George retorted back.

He liked Phil. He was nice and all, but George couldn't help but be slightly resentful of the man, of L. He forced George to grow up, and take this responsibility.

Yes, for the greater good. But at the cost of George's own freedom.

"I truly am sorry George. And I know there is nothing I can do to change anything. I hope some day you'll forgive me for putting you through all of this." Phil said, honestly. George sighed.

"I already forgave you." He said quietly. "I forgave you months ago. Even though you took my

freedom, you gave me the chance to help everyone else. I get to protect my family and my friends. I forgive you, but I'm not *thanking* you." George said. Phil nodded.

"You better get to school. I'll have a longer talk with you and Dream later." He said. George nodded and was about to leave, but stopped, opening up his bag pocket and pulling out number of pieces of jewellery.

"I haven't visited you in a while. So here you go. You may as well keep them." He said, handing the jewels he's collected recently over to Phil.

"Thank you George." He said. George gave him a quick tight-lipped smile before leaving and walking out of the store and back to school.

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The bell hadn't gone yet, thank goodness. But he decided to head to gym early, as he was making his way through the halls, someone came out of nowhere and pushed his shoulders against a locker.

He was face to face with Violet.

"You're such a brat." She said.

"Hi Violet." George said with an annoyed sigh. She scoffed.

"I heard you and Clay both ditched class together yesterday." She said.

"Ok? And?"

"Stay away from Clay. I know you like him, it's disgusting. Clay is straight." She said.

"Just because he is straight doesn't mean I should stay away from him." George said calmly. He really didn't want to start more shit.

"You'll infect him. You're disgusting. You're going to hell."

"Hell is going to be fucking lit if everyone else there is gay too." George laughed. Violet slapped him, and it took George by surprise. He groaned, since his head was still in pain from yesterday.

"Stay the fuck away from Clay."

"No. You stay the fuck away from Niki." George said, pointing a finger in her face. She slapped his hand away.

"Niki?"

"Yeah. Quit threatening her." George said. Violet rolled her eyes.

"Too fucking late. That bitch came out publicly already. See, George? Look what you've started. You're disgusting."

Niki came out? To the school?

"You're sick, Violet. Thinking you own the place, and own Clay. Let people love who they love." George said.

"Clay is mine. Back off."



"Or what, bitch?" George said. Violet stomped on his foot, making him hiss in pain.

"Or I'll tell everyone you like Clay." She said.

"I don't even like Clay." George said, but his voice faltered. And she noticed too.

"He will stop being friends with you if he finds out. And I'll let everyone know you've been harassing him."

"But that's not true!" He said. She put a hand over his mouth.

"Who are they going to believe?" She asked sweetly. George glared at her, and then spat on her hand. She squealed in disgust, wiping her hand on his jacket.

"Fucking f\*g." She said, pushing him one last time before turning and walking away. George watched as she left, feeling sick in the stomach.

He's learnt not to let her words affect him, but what if she does tell everyone he likes Clay? He could deny it, but would people believe him? What would Clay think if he knew he liked him? What if he stops being his friend?

George walked through the halls, almost on his tiptoes as he desperately tried to look for Niki. He had no clue where she would be, but he really wanted to check on her, if what Violet said was true.

"George?" He heard a voice, and he spun on his heels, seeing Niki standing near the girls bathrooms. George broke out into a smile and jogged over, pulling her in a hug she immediately melted into.

"I am so proud of you Niki." He said. She smiled and hugged back.

"Thank you, George."

"Seriously. You are so incredible. I don't think I could have done what you did." He said, pulling away to look at her. She looked confused.

"You basically *did* what I did." She said.

"Well. You did it on purpose. That takes a lot of courage." He pointed out.

"So does keeping your chin up while walking through the school as the *first* openly gay person. Don't make it sound like you aren't amazing too." She said. George smiled.

"Thank you, Niki." He said earnestly.

"And thank you George." She responded, and then saw Wilbur across the hall and gave him a wave, gesturing for him to come over.

George noticed Wilbur looked a bit tense. He smiled at Niki and hugged her in greeting, also giving George a smile, but went to check his phone again.

"Hi. Are you alright, Wilbur?" Niki asked. Wilbur nodded.

"I'm fine. Just family things." He said.

"Is your family ok?" George asked, immediately being concerned for Phil or Tommy.

"Yes, everyone is fine. It's just my brother."

"Tommy?" George asked.

"No, my older brother. He's in town. I haven't spoken to him since he left. It's been four years with no explanation and he's just back. Of course, Tommy is ecstatic. But I'm just kind of annoyed." Wilbur said.

"Oh. Well maybe you'll get an explanation?" George said. Wilbur sighed.

"I don't know if I want one." He responded.

The bell rang, and George parted from the pair, walking towards gym again, and was going to enter the boys locker room, but saw Clay waiting outside, sitting on the floor on his phone. He looked up when George arrived.

"George! How are you? Did you sleep well?" He asked, getting up and walking over.

"Hi. Um. I slept..." George was out the entire night. He woke up extremely groggy at 5am, but immediately checked his phone. There were no alerts. It took him half an hour to get out of bed, but it was strange having slept that much. "I slept well. I took the meds and I slept through the night for the first time in like... half a year."

Clay hugged him, which surprised George.

"That's awesome, George. I'm really proud." He said. George hugged back.

"Thanks. Um. How are you?" He asked as they pulled away.

"I'm alright. A bit better than yesterday but I guess not the best." Clay sighed, running a hand through his hair. His eye bags were still there. George wondered if Clay was the one not getting sleep now.

"That's good you're feeling better. You were sick yesterday in the lockdown. I meant to text you but I fell asleep. Were you alright?"

"Yeah, that was nothing. I'm all good. Thanks for being concerned though." Clay said. George nodded, unsure of what to say next.

"What are you doing not in gym?" He asked.

"I was waiting for you. I didn't want to sit on the bleachers alone. I would either sit with you or just ditch. But now you're here we can go in." Clay said. George nodded and they walked in. The teacher saw them and came over, Mrs Bell, who was actually their history teacher's wife.

"Why are you both late?" She demanded.

"Had to go to the Nurse for some pain killers for Clay's head." George lied. She looked between them.

"Whatever. You both have to sit out anyways." She waved her hand and walked away.

Nick, who was with the group of students, saw them and ran over despite the teacher's glare.

"Guys! Hi." He said with a goofy grin.

"Hey, we have to sit out." George said, vaguely gesturing to the bleachers. Nick nodded, but then started swaying side to side with a small smile on his face.

"Did you guys see the news yesterday?" He asked.

George knew this was going to happen. Nick loved the heroes, so the fact there was a new one was going to be the topic of conversation for probably a month.

"Yeah, I did." Clay said. Nick's expression didn't change, and he stayed silent for a moment.

"So? What did you think of Sapnap?" He said, bouncing on his toes.

"He seemed cool. I liked his power." Clay said, and Nick beamed, looking at George for a response.

"Sapnap? Who's Sapnap? I didn't watch it." George said, deciding to play his role of not caring about the heroes journeys.

"The new superhero! He helped out with the two villains yesterday! How did you not hear?" Nick asked. George shrugged.

"You really just don't care much about the heroes?" Clay asked George with a slight frown.

"Well... I just don't really follow it." George said awkwardly. "What did you think of Sapnap?" He then asked Nick, seeing the boy had a ton of energy. He was certain Nick must have a rant about the new superhero, with a deep analysis about his costume and power.

"He was cool." Was all Nick said.

George furrowed his eyebrows.

"That's it?"

"Well, yeah-"

"Armstrong get your ass back over here. You two, go sit down where you are supposed to." The teacher yelled, and Nick quickly jogged back over to the group, while Clay and George walked to sit on the bleachers.

"God, I hate this school. I want to drop out so bad." Clay said.

"Really? What about college?"

"It's not for me." Clay said.

"Oh yeah, your father is making you do finance. You know, you don't have to do what he says." George said. Clay sighed.

"I do though."

"It's your life."

"Yeah, but-" He was cut off by a ringtone. It wasn't an alert, but it made both of them jump. It was George's phone. He apologised and pulled it out, seeing Lexi's name at the top of the screen. He narrowed his eyes in confusion at it, but answered.

"Lexi?"

"George! Help!" She said. George's eyes went wide, and he pressed the phone tighter against his ear.

"What? What's wrong? Are you at school?" He asked.

"No. I was, but you went somewhere when we were dropped off and I went to follow you but I had no clue where you went. I was going down a random street when some guy came out of nowhere and tried to grab my arm. He was dressed like a villain. I screamed and ran and he just missed me, but he said some word and then grabbed a random person's arm instead, and they like, stopped what they were doing. I just turned and ran. I have no clue where I am or what just happened." She said, extremely quickly.

George stood up, swapping his phone to his other hand, and he started jogging down the bleachers.

"Describe where you are and I'll come find you." He said, running through the gym.

"George!" He heard Clay behind him, and he turned to see him jogging behind him.

"I... I'm in some alleyway. I'm hiding behind a dumpster. Um. I don't know. I'm really scared." She said, her voice wobbly like she was crying.

"It's ok. Just calm down. I'm coming now. What colour are the buildings either side of you?" He asked, and waved for Clay to go back to gym, but he shook his head and kept running with George through the school.

"What's happening?" Clay asked.

"My sister saw a villain, they tried to attack her and she is hiding somewhere." He said. Clay's eyes went wide, and George listened back to Lexi.

"One side is like a dark red brick. The one I'm leaning against is like a beige concrete wall." She said. George racked his brain of all the nearby alleyways. "You're colourblind, George!" She said, realising and freaking out.

"I think I know which alleyway. It's ok, I'm coming now. Don't hang up. Who was the villain that attacked you?" He asked. Clay made a motion with his hands, and George put the phone on speaker.

The two of them ran out of the school grounds, and George looked around, deciding to go left down the road.

"U-um. He was like... he had a red cape. And also a mask over his face that was like... a skull of some animal? And he had a crown. Please hurry George. I can hear something nearby." She said, her voice lowering to a whisper.

Both George and Clay's jaws dropped. *There's no way she saw the Blade, right?*

"And he what? Tried to grab your arm?"

"Yeah. But I got away and he got some random lady."

"Where are they?" George asked.

"I don't know. I just ran away. AH! NO!" She screamed into the phone, and George's heart

dropped. He stopped running and stared at the phone.

"Lexi? What's going on?" He asked. He could hear her breathing heavily through the phone and could hear footsteps, her running.

"There's another villain. She's in like all purple. And she has like a bow and tried to shoot me. George, please help." Lexi said into the phone.

George put one hand in his hair and tugged, looking around, unsure of where to go.

"Where are you now?" Clay asked into the phone.

"Who is that?" She asked in fear.

"My friend, Clay. Where are you?" George asked. Lexi screamed and didn't answer for a few seconds. George listened to her panicked breathing through the phone as she ran.

"I don't know! I've never been to these streets before. There's just a lot of apartments. And a laundromat! I'm going in there." She said.

"Which laundromat?" George asked.

"It says Lachlan's Laundromat." She said. George and Clay immediately started running, both of them recognising the store name. They knew the city well.

"Ok. Just stay in there, get someone to call the police. We are coming now." George said.

"Ok." She said with a deep breath. "George, I'm really scared." She said.

"It's ok. You'll be ok. I'm coming. And Dream and GNotFound are going to stop the villains, alright?" George said. She hummed in response.

"I'll call my father, get him to send out an alert for GNotFound. And Dream." Clay said, pulling out his phone. George nodded. He needed Dream's help. He had to get Lexi as George first.

Clay rang his father, but the dial just went on for several seconds. He swore when it went to voicemail, and he tried texting instead.

"Oh my God! No!" Lexi suddenly screamed, and the phone line went dead. George gasped and tried calling her back, but she didn't pick up.

"Shit. Shit shit shit." He said.

"It's ok. I'm sure she'll be ok." Clay said.

They both ran through the streets of the city, trying to get to where Lexi said she was hiding. Eventually they reached the laundromat, but when they got there, the windows had been smashed and the lights inside were dead.

"Lexi!" George yelled, running inside the ajar door, his feet crunching on broken glass. There wasn't anyone inside, but he could hear sirens in the distance.

An alert sounded from both of their phones.

## CODE RED

### A purple villain with bow making people disappear

George read the alert and his shaky hands made him drop his phone on the floor. Clay stepped forward and picked it up, then hugged him.

"It's ok. I'm sure she's fine. And when the villain gets defeated, everything will be fixed." He said, passing the phone back.

"Lexi!" George called, pushing Clay away and running through the store. He ran around, trying to find any sign of someone. No one was here, not even an employee in the back.

"George, you should go to the police station or your parents for now. Until the superheroes fix everything." Clay said. George wiped his face.

"Lex?" He called out again, spinning around to see anyone, but his bad ankle twisted, and he fell over, onto some broken glass. He caught himself by his hands, but winced as he got some cuts on them.

Clay immediately ran forward and helped him up, gently grabbing his hands and checking them. There were small bits of glass in them, already oozing blood.

"George, take a deep breath." Clay said, looking into the smaller boy's eyes. George looked up, feeling like his throat was closing up. "I swear to you, your sister is going to be ok." He said, looking back down at his hands. "Fuck. That's a lot of glass."

George closed his eyes and shook his head. *I need to focus.*

"Maybe she ran to the next store." He said, swallowing thickly and pulling away from Clay, putting his cut hands behind his back.

"We should get to safety." Clay said, but George shook his head and pushed past, running out of the store. Clay swore under his breath, but figured that he could help more if he was actually Dream.

He ran out the back of the store. "Mask on." He said, and transformed into Dream. And then he quickly ran back out onto the street, to see where George went.

He checked his phone. There was a live news story saying the villain was last spotted just a few streets away from where he was now.

He didn't know where George was, but figured the best way he could help is by defeating the villain.

He pocketed his phone again, and climbed up the building and reached the top, scanning around the city for any sign of disruption.

He heard a yell, and snapped his head towards the sound. He immediately started running, jumping across several buildings to get to the place where he heard it.

Down below, he caught glimpse of a tall figure in purple, aiming a bow at a mother, standing in front of her child.

He immediately dropped from the roof and used his sword to hit away the bow, just before the villain could shoot. It took the villain by surprise, who turned and sprinted to where their bow landed, but Clay followed, twisting his grip on the hilt of his sword.

"Stop!" He yelled, bringing the sword pointed at the villain's back. The woman slowly turned, her mouth visible but the top half of her face covered by a weird shaped mask.

"Give me your jewel. Now." He said, catching a glimpse of the tiara on her head with a jewel in its centre. The woman just smiled.

"No." She said, and flipped backwards from the weapon, kicking her bow in the air and catching it, and then sprinting away. Clay chased her, but she turned and shot an arrow at him, which he narrowly avoided. The arrows must be what makes people disappear.

He followed her through a number of streets, with her constantly aiming back and shooting at him, and him dodging or deflecting with his sword. He didn't know what to do, he wasn't faster than her. He needed G.

"Lexi!" He heard a boy's voice call down the street, and it made Clay freeze, fear coursing through his body as the villain's head snapped towards the sound.

The villain changed her goal to wherever George was calling from, and Clay started to panic.

When they rounded the corner of the street, Clay could see George jogging, checking various stores. The villain pulled back her bow and lined up a shot.

"George! Run!" Clay called, and the boy turned around, his eyes wide with fear.

Clay threw his sword at the exact same time the villain shot an arrow, and it hit it in the air, making both weapons fall a few feet away. The villain turned and pulled back her bow to shoot at Dream again in frustration, but Clay just dodged it and ran towards George, scooping up his sword in the process.

"What the hell are you doing, George! You're going to get hurt!" Dream yelled, and grabbed George's and pulled him down an alleyway which led to another street. He could hear the villain running after them, but he pulled George along regardless.

"You need to hide, George!" Clay said, not giving George a choice before picking him up so they could run faster. George wasn't expecting it, and he gasped and tightened his hands around Dream's neck.

"My sister-

"George, I hate to break it to you. But if she was out here, she probably got shot. I'll get her back, I swear, but you need to focus and hide. Ok? Get some common sense in your brain." Clay said, running through several streets and taking multiple turns to confuse the villain, before running into the exact same laundromat where he left George to start with. He put the boy down on his feet.

George used the back of his hands to wipe his teary eyes.

"You're right. I was just worried if she was hiding somewhere, scared. But I can't find her. It'll be my fault if we can't get her back." He said, sniffing and looking up at Dream.

"I will get her back, and it is not your fault. Ok?" He said, grabbing George's hands. The brunette hissed in pain and pulled away his hands. Clay looked and saw the several bleeding cuts covering

the palms of his hands.

"Do you want me to take you back to your school? Or to a hospital? To get those cleaned." He asked. George immediately shook his head.

"No. You need to fight. And I'm staying here. If Lexi comes back, I want to make sure she is ok." He said.

"Ok. Stay hidden. I'll bring her back, I swear." Clay said. George nodded, and Clay gave him a smile before running back out of the store to find the villain again.

He ran a different way back, in case the villain could find her way back to George.

He rounded a corner, and an arrow just barely grazed his mask, making him gasp in shock. He brought his sword up in front of him, ready to fight the villain near.

She laughed, still with her bow raised.

"*George!*" She mocked. "Who was that, Dream? You know him? Where did you hide him?" She asked.

Shit.

"I don't know him." Clay said quickly. She scoffed, shooting an arrow which he easily deflected. She was just shooting for fun at this point.

"You called him by name. That was a silly mistake, wasn't it. What if I tell the Blade?" She said with glee. Clay grew angrier by the second, his grip getting tighter. "Dreamypoo has a little friend and doesn't want him to get hurt. It would be a shame if someone were to... hurt him. Hm?" She said.

"Shut up." Clay said.

"So where is he? Where's *George*."

"Shut. Up!" Clay said, and charged forward with his sword. She shot, which he dodged, and then she jumped on to a parked car, then onto the side of a building and started climbing up it.

Clay didn't hesitate to follow.

Now there was yet another rooftop chase. The villain was laughing as she ran, shooting arrow after arrow behind her at Clay, who was dodging. She was singing George's name repeatedly like it was the most amusing thing to her.

"*You're going to get hurt, George!*" She cackled.

"Shut the fuck up." Clay yelled.

Out of nowhere, a blue ball of fury tackled the villain from the side, knocking her to the ground and her bow flew out of her grip.

GNotFound had pinned her to the ground, trying to keep her contained. Clay immediately ran to assist, grabbing her tiara as she yelled one final time before transforming back into her civilian self.

In a sigh of relief, G got off her and sat on his knees. Clay examined the tiara, before turning to look at his partner.



He handed him the jewel, and then turned and started walking away.

"Wait, Dream!" G called, but Clay ignored him. G ran around so he was standing in front of him, making Clay stop.

"Oh. Hi GNotFound." Clay said in a monotone voice. G frowned.

"Are you still mad that L and I didn't tell you-"

"Of course I'm still fucking mad!" Clay said. He was rightfully angry. Angry that his partner didn't trust him. Angry that the person who gave him his freedom didn't trust him. Angry about everything.

"I know. I'm sorry. I spoke to L-"

"To be honest, I really don't fucking care what you two spoke about." Clay scoffed, trying to go past his partner, who stopped him again.

"He agreed to see you." G said quickly. Clay stopped. "Arrive at 5:30pm tonight. Not any earlier, and make sure that you're in your civilian form." G said.

"Where?" Clay asked simply. G looked around, before passing him a piece of paper.

"I don't want to say it out loud. Once you read this, destroy it." He said. Clay opened it, and recognised the address, his eyes going wide.

He stuffed the piece of paper in his mouth, and it made G take an entire step back in surprise.

"I suppose that works too... anyways. I'm sorry again. I'll see you there." G said, and turned to leave. Clay swallowed the paper, as if he does it often.

"Wait." Clay said, and ran and hugged G. "Thank you." He whispered.

"Of course. We're friends. Do you mind taking her back to the police? I have to do something." G said.

"Ok. Sure." Clay said, letting go and turning back to the woman who was sitting on the rooftop, holding her head and looking dazed.

He turned back to see G had already disappeared off the rooftop.

George was desperate to check if Lexi had come back. He transformed back in a random alleyway, like usual, and made his way back to the laundromat.

When he got there, he saw multiple people standing outside, looking at the wreckage, including some in uniforms. As he got closer, he recognised a girl off to the side, desperately tapping on her phone.

"Lexi!" He yelled, and the brunette girl looked up. Her face turned into relief and she sprinted to meet him, limping as she ran. George embraced her in a tight hug, holding her head against his shoulder, ignoring the stinging in his hands.

"I'm so sorry I couldn't find you." George whispered.

"I'm ok." She said back. He didn't want to let go. He has never been that scared in his life, and he's been in quite a few stressful situations.

"Are you hurt?" He asked, pulling away. She pulled up her pant leg, to reveal an arrow wound.

"Oh my god, is everyone else here hurt?" He asked, looking at everyone. They all had similar wounds. None too big, but all bleeding a bit.

"It's not too bad." Lexi said, but she was wincing as she spoke.

There was a number of sirens that turned into the street, and several paramedics all got out. One came over to Lexi and George.

"Are you two alright?" The man asked, with a prominent scottish accent.

"She was shot by an arrow in the leg." George said. A different paramedic brought over a stretcher and got her to sit on it, starting to treat the wound.

While Lexi was getting treated, George heard a cough come from nearby, which sounded weirdly familiar. So he turned, and saw a masked man at the corner of the street, watching him. Dream motioned for him to come over.

George looked back at Lexi.

"I'll be back. I think I dropped my phone at the street over there." He said. Lexi looked worried. "I'll be like thirty seconds." He assured her, and she nodded.

He ran over, out of sight of the crowd, where Dream was.

"Dream?"

"Sorry, I didn't want everyone to see me." Dream said, backing slightly into an alleyway so he wasn't visible in the street.

"It's ok. My sister is back, so thank you." George said.

"That's good to hear." Dream said, but there was something about his voice that seemed off. He was smiling, sure. But George has spoken with Dream enough times to know.

"What's wrong?" George asked immediately.

"How did you know something is wrong?" Dream asked.

"Intuition. Tell me." George said.

"Look, I am so so sorry George. I didn't mean for anything like this to happen. I wasn't thinking, and I'm really scared now." Dream said quickly. George shushed him.

"It's ok. What it is?" He said, now also worried since Dream didn't say anything was wrong to GNotFound.

"When I got you to safety, the villain heard me yell George and then save you. She then kept asking me how I knew you, and trying to find you, to mess with me. She knows I know you, even if I don't actually know you that well." Dream said.

"Oh. That's fine though, because she's defeated right? You took her power?" George asked.

"Yeah. But I have a really bad feeling that the Blade knows I know you now. You could be a target. He could use you to get to me." Dream said.

George paused. He didn't think about that. That was a really good point.

He forgot he was George for a second, so quickly switched back to clueless civilian.

"Wait. The Blade? I thought he was dead?" He said, playing dumb, while still processing what a horrible situation this could be.

"Shit. Um. Yeah, no, he's the one sending all the villains. But I'm sure it'll be fine. He may not have noticed, or wasn't told by the villain what happened. Or, if he does know that I know your name, that doesn't mean I actually know you. It could all be fine." Dream said.

George was silent.

"But, if he does think you know me... then he might target me?" He said.

"I swear, I won't let him hurt you at all, ok? I promise. I know you don't know me well, but I'll protect you ok?" Dream said. George was in a daze.

"I'll be fine." He said.

"I can't visit you anymore." Dream then said, and George looked up into his eyes, a frown on his face.

"Wait... like... not on my roof anymore?" He asked. George was surprised he cared so much. They only talked a couple of times, why did it make him upset? He sees Dream almost everyday.

"It's too risky. I'm sorry." Dream said. George was silent for a moment.

"No... that makes sense. It's ok. It was only like once anyway. You're a superhero. It's not even important." George said, with a laugh.

Dream put both his hands on his shoulders.

"It was three times. And it was important to me. It meant more to me than you think." He said with sincerity. George suppressed a smile, staring intently into Dream's green eyes.

"Even with all my stupid rants that you were forced to listen to?" George asked softly, and Dream smiled.

*"I liked listening to you."* He said, squeezing his shoulders. "I enjoyed every moment. It made me feel... normal. You're the first person to treat me like a normal person."

"What about your civilian self? That must be normal." George pointed out. Dream shook his head.

"No. Out of everyone, you're still one of the only people to treat me like me." Dream said, with a small twinge of sadness.

They both fell into a silence for a few moments, until Dream broke it again.

"I won't let anything happen to you, ok? Now go back to your sister." He said, clearing his throat and dropping his hands from George's shoulders.

"Ok. Thank you, Dream." George said.

"No, thank you, George." He responded, and gave him a salute before jogging away.

George stood there for a moment longer, unsure of why he was so upset. He enjoyed chatting with Dream. It felt so different when they weren't fighting, or talking about plans, or arguing. When it was just the two of them and the stars.

He shook his head, and turned back to see Lexi. Who relaxed the second she saw him come around the corner again. Her leg was bandaged.

"What took you so long?" She said, hopping off the stretcher and coming over to him.

"It took a while to find." He said, pulling out his phone. "Shit." He said, when his hand pressed against the device. Lexi's eyes went wide when she saw his bloody hands.

"Excuse me!" She said out to the paramedic again, who turned to look at her. "My brother's hands are cut from glass." She said, pulling George by the elbow, and making him sit on the stretcher.

"Why didn't you say anything sooner, mate?" The paramedic said, shaking his head and grabbing out a kit to take out the small shards of glass and clean the cuts to bandage.

"Didn't really notice it." George said sheepishly.

As his hands were getting treated, George suddenly remembered something.

"Clay." He said, and Lexi turned to him. "Where the hell did Clay go? He was with me to find you but I ran off." George said. Lexi furrowed her eyebrows.

"Did he get shot too?" She asked.

"Shit. I don't know. I completely forgot about him. I left him alone to find you. I'm a horrible friend, oh my god." George said, wanting to face palm, but his hands were occupied.

"Do you want me to call him from your phone?" Lexi asked. George nodded, and she took the phone from his back jean's pocket, opening up the lockscreen.

"Why is Nick your background?" She laughed.

"Long story. Passcode is 404404." He said. She scoffed.

"That's stupid." She said, but typed it in, going to his contact and searching Clay, calling the number.

"Put it on speaker near my face." He said. She giggled and shook her head, holding it to her ear.

"Lexi!" He said. But she just grinned.

"Hi! Clay, is it? I'm Lexi, George's sister." She said, and then silence followed. "Yeah I'm fine now. George isn't though. He died." She said with a pout.

"Lexi." He said with a death stare. She tried not to laugh.

"Yeah, no, dead." She said, and made a weird sound as she imitated slicing her throat. "Quite a shame, really." She sighed.

The paramedic finished doing the bandages, and the second he did, George launched forwards and stole the phone back.

"I'm sorry, Clay. I was getting bandaged up for my hands. I'm sorry I ran off, are you ok? Where are you?" He asked.

"I'm fine, just a bit lost." Clay laughed. "I think I can hear people though, so I'll follow the voices. I tried to find you but you disappeared." Clay said.

"I really, really am sorry about that." George said, feeling awful.

"Don't be. Oh, there you are." He said, and George looked up to see Clay come from the same street Dream did. He hung up and jogged over.

"I'm glad you're both ok." He said.

"And you." George said, seeing that Clay wasn't hurt at all. "I'll give Mom a call to take you home, Lex." He said, and then looked back at his phone his phone.

"And you, right?" She said.

"I need to go back to school, I have a bunch of assignments and my attendance is already atrocious." He said, and then called his Mom, who answered extremely quickly.

"George, honey? Are you ok? You weren't involved with the villain were you?" She asked.

"I'm ok. So is Lexi. We were though, and Lexi got shot by them. She's ok now, the paramedics bandaged us but we are in the middle of the city." George said.

"Oh my God. Ok, I'll call a substitute teacher in and I'll come pick you two up." She said.

"Can you pick up Clay too? He's here as well." George said. Clay looked like he was about to interrupt to decline, but George stopped him.

"Of course. I can drop him off at his house and then bring you and Lexi home." She said.

"Ok, thanks. Actually can you take me back to school? I'm not hurt and I have assignments I need to do." George said.

"Are you sure? I don't mind if you take the rest of the day off." She said.

"Yeah I'm fine." George said.

"Can I go back to school too?" Clay asked. And George nodded, letting his Mom know.

Nothing out of the ordinary; just two superheroes going back to high school after defeating a villain. No big deal.

## Chapter End Notes

I have an exam tomorrow. But I have a fear of being a disappointment so I updated anyways. You're welcome lol

# Explanation

## Chapter Summary

George and Dream have some questions for Phil. What do the jewels mean? Why does the Blade want them? And how can they defeat him?

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George was walking through the streets with his hands in his pockets and music playing through his earbuds. The walk from his house to Phil's store was quite long, but he couldn't drive himself either or there was a chance Dream might see his car. He could have parked elsewhere and then walked, but by that logic, he just decided that a nice walk could be enjoyable. His parents thought he was going to Nick's house.

When they went back to school, Nick had seen him and Clay run out of gym, so immediately interrogated the two of them, who explained exactly what happened, that Lexi was in trouble.

However the rest of the day felt weird. George noticed that Clay had stayed with him the whole time. In history, of course, but then also sat with George's group again during both recess breaks. He wasn't in computer science or English with George, but met him in between both classes.

George was growing suspicious. He knew exactly why Clay was doing what he was doing. Even though George had told him multiple times that he didn't need protecting, Clay still ignored him. George believe his goal was to stop random kids from bullying him.

But Clay's worries about George's safety extended beyond measly teenagers. He didn't want to leave George alone too much. If the Blade knows he cares for George, he could use it against Dream.

Not that George knows that, of course.

George arrived at Phil's at five o'clock exactly. The sign on the front said closed, but George knocked anyway. A few moments passed, before Phil eventually came over and unlocked it, letting him in.

"After the villain, I assumed you organised with Dream to meet tonight. So I closed the store a bit earlier since I had no idea what time." Phil said. George nodded, and followed him through to the back room, where Phil opened the door and let him in.

"Are your hands alright? How did that happen?" Phil asked.

"Cut it on glass before I transformed. I'm alright though." George said. Phil nodded.

"Would you like something to drink? Water, juice, tea, coffee, hot chocolate?" He asked, making small talk.

"Could I have a hot chocolate please?" George asked. He couldn't deal with coffee, it was too bitter for him. Which is strange, because unlike most teenagers, his lack of sleep wasn't due to caffeine

intake.

"Sure. Also, you can transform now in case Dream joins us anytime soon." Phil said. George nodded.

"Mask on." He said, and transformed into GNotFound. Phil smiled and went to the kitchenette in the room, preparing a hot chocolate.

"What time did you tell Dream?"

"5:30."

"And you made sure no one else could have potentially heard the location?"

"Yep. Dream ate the piece of paper I gave him." George said. Phil paused and looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "Yeah, I know. He's a weird guy." George said, but laughed fondly.

"I see. So how did today go?" Phil asked. George hesitated.

"It went alright. I joined a bit late because I was more concerned for my sister. But it turned out well." He avoided mentioning the whole Dream-knowing-George issue because technically GNotFound shouldn't know. And if Dream decides to tell him, Phil needed to be surprised.

"I see. Your sister is ok though?"

"She's fine."

Once Phil made the hot chocolate, he gave it to the hero and sat down opposite the couch, on his own chair with a cup of tea. And the pair sat in silence while they waited for Dream.

It was safe to say that it was a very awkward silence. George wanted to ask so much, but refrained, so that Dream could be here too.

Finally, half an hour later, there was a knock on the door. Clay was extremely nervous as he stood outside the store. He had to sneak out of his house, and walk, so he was also stressed about making it on time.

Eventually, the man opened the door for him, and Clay stood there, still for a moment.

"Um. Hi, Phil. Are... um..." He didn't want to be wrong.

"Come in, Clay." Phil said, opening the door wider and letting the boy in. He closed it behind and locked the door.

"I.... are you...." Clay was so worried he got the wrong person or the wrong address.

"Yes. I am L." Phil said with a nervous smile.

There was a few seconds where both of them were completely silent.

But Clay suddenly leaped forward and embraced the older, slightly shorter man. He buried his face into his shoulder.

"Thank you. Thank you thank you thank you." He said. Phil put a hand on his back and patted it. He was shocked at Clay's response, expecting something similar to George's. But instead the boy was hugging him.

"Oh." Phil said. Clay pulled away, and there was a grin on his face.

"I am so excited to finally meet you." Clay said.

"We have met before." Phil chuckled.

"But as the person who gave me this." Clay said, pointing to his ring. "Is G here yet?" He asked. Phil nodded.

"Yes. He is in the back, he can't hear us. Come through here and you can transform in a different room." He said, and lead the way through the store, taking the eager teen into a separate room.

"Mask on." He said, and transformed into Dream, still with the same excited smile on his face.

"I thought you would be upset with me." Phil said.

"I was only angry because you didn't want me to know. But I'm not upset about you giving me the Emerald. It's the best thing that has happened to me." Clay said. Phil gestured for him to follow, and lead him back into the same room as G was. He was sitting down on the couch, still sipping his hot chocolate.

Dream smiled again when he saw him, and promptly sat down beside him.

"Hey G." He said, immediately putting his hand in his partner's black hair, ruffling it. George shoved him off, and put down his hot chocolate on the table.

"Hi Dream." He responded.

"Would you like something to drink too, Dream." Phil said. He had to be careful to use their superhero names. But he was well practised.

"I'm alright." He said. Phil nodded and took a seat opposite them.

None of them knew how to start. George was staring at Phil intently, sipping from his drink and waiting for him to say something. But Phil was waiting for them to ask a question.

"So. The fight today, huh?" Dream said, strumming his thumbs together as he started the small talk.

"How do you have all the jewels? What are they, where do they come from? How do they work. Why does the Blade want them?" George said, putting down his drink. Phil chuckled slightly.

"Ok, how about we start with how we got here first. From three years ago." Phil said. George leaned back, raising an eyebrow, but nodded.

"Ok, so I have looked after the jewels for about three decades. Three years ago, I did not have *all* the ones in the world, but I'd say I had majority in my possession. I had three of the precious jewels, all but the Ruby. But I had most of the less powerful jewels. Three years ago, I had them kept in an undisclosed part of the city. I thought it would be safer if they were not with me. The only one I kept with me was the Diamond, I had the bracelet on at all times just in case. One day, the alarm went off so I rushed to the location of the jewels. I transformed and went in, where there was The Blade. He had the Ruby that had been missing. I have no clue how he got it." Phil said.

"So you didn't have the Ruby? He got it from somewhere else? Where?" George said. Phil nodded.

"I don't know. There was a fight. A small one. He won and it ended with him taking almost all the



jewels, I barely got out with the Diamond. But I had hidden the other precious jewels in a more secure spot, he couldn't find where they were. The only reason he gave up, was because he used his power on someone before he arrived, and had only a few minutes before he would change back. He couldn't let me see who he was. He figured he had more chances to get the precious jewels." Phil explained.

"His power. The Ruby. What does it do?" Dream asked. Phil sighed.

"So the four precious jewels are the most powerful, and thus they have a cooldown. That's why you have to change back, but the villains don't. The Sapphire." Phil said, pointing at George's pendant. "Is the power of protection. A shield." He said. George put his hand over the glistening jewel.

"The Emerald." He gestured to Dream's ring. "Has the power of Projection. An illusion of yourself. The Diamond, which you saw... er, Sappnap use, is the power of Generation, a lightning bolt. And the Ruby... is the power of manipulation."

"Manipulation." George repeated.

"Yes. Blade can control a person. For as long as he is transformed, he can directly give orders to them. But if he transforms back to his civilian self, they still do what he previously asked, except he cannot give new directives. If he takes off the jewel, then the manipulation ends."

"Wait wait wait. Hold on. That doesn't make any sense. Every time we defeated a villain, the second we took their jewel, their memory was erased. How can he do that?" George asked.

"When the manipulation ends, the person forgets what they did. So every time you defeat them, he takes off his jewel. This way they forget what they did and can't expose him." Phil explained.

"He does it every time? How does he take off his jewel at the exact same moment we take the villains jewel?" Dream asked.

"He has a small connection to his victim. They can communicate to him, the same way he can communicate to them when he is transformed. He gives them orders, they respond. They tell him the second before you take their power, and he takes off his earring." Phil said.

"So... the villains can communicate to him. Even when he's in civilian form..." George said.

"Yes. But he can't communicate back in civilian form."

"Why is his power so much more overpowered than ours? My clone lasts two minutes and G's shield lasts thirty seconds. But his manipulation lasts for ages?" Dream said.

"All four jewels are powerful. They all have different elements to them, but they balance out. The Ruby has weaknesses, too."

"Like what." George said.

"We can get to that later. A discussion on how to defeat the Blade can happen another time." Phil said.

"Ok... so you said he took basically all the jewels. From the rumours I've heard, you and him had a massive fight. On the same day the city went into chaos. How was the whole city at war?" George asked.

"To this day, I still have no idea exactly how he did it. He did something extremely smart and powerful, but it nearly killed him. From what I gathered, he had the use of another gem as well. I've been trying to figure out which one exactly, but it allowed him to get into the minds of multiple people at once, making them do bad things." Phil said.

"Why did he do that though?" Dream asked.

"He was trying to find me. I had taken the jewels I had left and moved them to somewhere different and safer. He was mad, and wanted me to hand them over or he destroys the city."

"You were called the Liberator because you came and saved the day. They described you as green, white and blue. What did you do to stop him?" George asked.

"I made the same mistake the Blade did. I combined jewels. I realised he must have, and I had never known it was possible. I put on the Diamond, Emerald and Sapphire and merged them. It changed my costume too. It became mostly green and white, with blue wings that didn't actually make me fly. That day... merging the jewels... it was the worst decision I have ever made." Phil said, shaking his head.

"But it worked. It couldn't have been the worst decision." Dream pointed out.

"Do you know how bad it would have been if I failed? He would have all three of them. And, as the both of us discovered, using multiple jewels at once backfires. Sort of. It nearly killed me after the fight. I was in hospital for months, a coma. My kids had no idea what happened to cause it, no one did. I got better, but my body can't handle jewels anymore. I tried transforming once, it made me physically sick." Phil said.

"Did the same thing happen to the Blade then?" George asked.

"Well, I don't exactly know. I was using more powerful jewels than him. He had one of the precious jewels and one other one. I had three precious jewels. I nearly defeated him and was going to take his jewel, but he escaped. Easily, actually. My body was shutting down. And he was also weak. I didn't hear anything from him in years. I thought maybe he died, or like me, couldn't transform anymore." Phil said.

"Well. Clearly he got better." Dream said, and George gave him a look.

"Yes. The day the first villain came, I was in complete shock. It wasn't the Blade, but I knew which jewel it was. And I knew it was one of the ones he had stolen. He must have known I survived too, and still had the jewels. And then more and more villains were showing up. Every few months. And then monthly. Which I don't know if you remember, but monthly was a lot, a year ago." Phil said.

They both nodded.

"So. I realised something had to stop them. The city was in shambles, in fear. There was lockdowns and people getting hurt. I couldn't help, but I needed some people who could." Phil said, looking between the two of them.

"And your best idea was to pick the first two teenagers you saw and give them a jewel." George said, his eyes narrowing again, not that either of them could see. Dream turned to him.

"I chose two young men how showed the capabilities-"

"And forced this responsibility on them with no guidance and no help." George said.

"G, calm down." Dream said quietly. George turned to him with a scoff.

"I am calm. I've already forgiven you, Phil. But I just don't see the reasoning behind why you chose us. Why not your own kids, hm?" George said. Phil looked down, slightly guilty. "Yeah. You didn't want them to put their lives in danger. You didn't want them to ruin their lives." George said.

"My youngest was fourteen." Phil said. George nodded.

"I know. Obviously you wouldn't give it to him. Because he's just a kid. But you know we are also just kids, right?" George said.

"I know. I really am sorry for what I did to you both. I never knew how bad it would get." Phil said. He was truly, very guilty.

"I'm not mad." Dream said. Phil looked at him and George just shook his head with a sigh. "I know maybe I should be, but this was honestly the best thing to happen to me."

"How? It's stressful, on top of every other part of your life. And you get less time as your civilian self." George said.

"I mean, yeah it's stressful, but-"

"You get less sleep, less time to study, less social life, less spending time with family...." George counted off on his fingers.

"All of that is true, but I don't particularly like my civilian self very much at times, and this gives me a chance to escape all of that. I know you may hate this and every aspect of it, but that doesn't mean I have to as well. I'm just being honest. This was the best thing to happen to me." Dream said, his tone showing slight frustration but his eyes not showing any anger.

George went silent. Dream has said multiple times how this was like an escape for him, and he prefers being Dream over his civilian self. George just couldn't comprehend it. But he doesn't know Dream, he doesn't know his situation. Who was George to tell Dream how he should feel about everything.

"I'm sorry. You're right. I can't tell you how you should feel about it all." George said. Dream looked at him with a smile.

"It's alright." He said. George sighed in relief. He really couldn't do with another fight.

"So. The jewels. Can we go back to how they actually work and what they mean?" George asked, steering the conversation back to the main topic. Phil cleared his throat and nodded.

"They have been around for centuries, millennia. But there is only one of each jewel type that is special." Phil said.

"And they all have different powers?" Dream asked.

"Yes. Some may be similar in qualities, but they all do different things. However they all are utilised the same way, with the commands of Mask on and Mask off. And they each have one power, and most have at least one weapon or tool. Like your bow and sword." He explained.

"You mentioned the four most precious gemstones..." George said.

"Yes. Sapphire, Emerald, Ruby and Diamond. They are the most powerful. They each have a

cooldown after the power use."

"I just don't understand how they are the most powerful. Take the villain that could throw fire for example. She could throw fireball after fireball, destroying the entire city, and not have to transform back. I can use my shield once, for thirty seconds, and transform back ten minutes later? Seems to me like I'm the weak one." George argued.

"But yet, you have defeated every villain that has crossed your path." Phil said with a raised eyebrow.

"Well, that's because it's two verse one, usually." Dream said.

"Do you both know the meanings of your jewels?" Phil said. George furrowed his eyebrows at the change of conversation.

"Protection and Projection?" He said.

"No. That's the powers. I'm asking for the meanings, what the jewels represent." Phil said.

The heroes were silent for a moment.

"Intuition... creativity?" Dream said slowly. Phil smiled.

"That's right, Dream. I forgot I spoke to you about it a while ago. Different cultures believe different meanings for the jewels. The Emerald, like you said is the jewel of intuition, creativity and love. And it's said that people who wear an emerald on them have increased perception and intuition." Phil explained.

"That's just some random meaning that isn't actually true though, right? Like star signs? It's just a belief." George said.

"There is some truth to it, in this sense. What it means, is the Emerald works best for those who are intuitive, creative, and loving. And for those, it increases their love for others, intuition and perception of the world." Phil said.

"So you're telling me that Dream... is intuitive and creative and... loving." George said. Dream grinned.

"Yes. That's why I chose him. And since he is those things, when he wears his jewel, his love, perception and intuition is enhanced."

"What does that even mean?" George asked.

"Perception in this sense means he's more in tune with others." Phil turned to Dream. "You can read people better and you also interpret situations really well. Your intuition acts on this, and you understand things very quickly, and act on instinct." Phil said.

"So he's reckless." George said with a scoff.

"At times. But sometimes recklessness turns out good. His instincts are often right. The only time it fails him is when he is trying too hard, or is distracted." Phil said.

"Ok... and how does this prove your point that our jewels are the most powerful?" George asked.

"The other jewels do not have these meanings. Of course, there are still beliefs around them, but they don't reign true for the magical ones. The only jewels with meanings and purposes are the

four precious ones."

"What?" George asked, just simply lost.

"Your jewels *fit* you. You are well suited for them and it makes you more powerful in fights." Phil said.

"Do the Sapphire. What does it mean!" Dream said excitedly, pointing at George's chest and grinning. George rolled his eyes but smiled at Dream's excitement.

"The Sapphire is the jewel of protection and wisdom. It is said that the Sapphire brings increased justice and judgment to the wearer." Phil said.

"Is that the myth or is that true?" George said.

"It's basically true. The Sapphire works well for people who are smart, and quick-thinking. And who put others before themselves." Phil said. Dream looked at George with a smile. "And it brings an increased sense of justice, doing what is right. As well as judgment. So while Dream may act on his instincts, you prefer to weigh up the options and formulate a plan." He said.

"That has nothing to do with our jewels though. I think that's probably just who we are." George said, thinking the whole thing is bullshit.

"Well, I chose you both for a reason." Phil said.

"It seems like the jewels are exact opposites. He's a creative, risk-taker. And apparently I'm some nerdy Type A." George said, crossing his arms across his chest.

"Another thing about the most powerful jewels is that they are more powerful together. Not worn at the same time, of course, but working together actually makes you more powerful. You may be different, but that means you bring different strengths. You need each other." He said.

"Right." George said, still with narrowed eyes. This all sounded ridiculous.

"I think it makes sense." Dream said. George looked at him. "I am more fun than him." He shrugged. George shoved him.

"Shut up, Dream." He scoffed.

Dream nudged him back, so they bickered for a few moments while Phil watched them curiously.

"What's the Ruby and Diamond's meaning?" Dream asked when they finally stopped.

"Diamond's are the jewel of dependability and commitment. So for those who are trustworthy and loyal, it increases their courage and ability to read people."

"Read people?" George asked with raised eyebrows.

"Yes. Those with the Diamond are very loyal and understand the people they are with. This allows them to work well in teams, and see what everyone's roles are or should be."

"So... like how me and G have different strengths, the Diamond is sort of the glue between it? Like to help it work together?" Dream asked and Phil smiled.

"You're getting it. Like I said, the precious jewels were made together and work well when in use alongside each other. Sapnap was there to pick up where GNotFound was unable to provide. He

had quick thinking to use his power when he did, and never hesitated when saving his team."

"So what is the Ruby for then?" George asked.

"The Ruby is the jewel of passion and power. It works well for those who are driven and motivated, and it increases their sense of power and their persistence."

"So basically the Blade is like super stubborn and power hungry." Dream scoffed.

"You could see it like that. That jewel would work well with the others because the persistence and motivation keeps the team moving forward and not giving up. But... obviously... that jewel is not in our possession."

"How can a jewel that was made to be good and useful be used for evil?" Dream asked.

"Any of the jewels can be used for evil. Imagine if a villain had the intuition you do, Dream, with the power to create a carbon copy of themselves. Or a villain with the tactical advantage of GNotFound, with an impenetrable shield. Or even someone with the courage of the Diamond, and the ability to read and understand their components with a lightning bolt."

"I guess that makes sense." Dream said.

"Ok enough with the meanings and purpose crap." George said, looking to Phil. "You said the Ruby uses the power of manipulation and then transforms back after ten minutes, like us. Then how the hell did he manipulate two villains the other day? I thought he could only do one at a time." George said. Dream stopped too, and looked at Phil. The both of them were interested.

"I... I have no idea." Phil said. George frowned.

"How do you not know?"

"Its like the same thing as Doomsday, when he controlled almost half the city. But I still don't know what he did. He is smart enough to not try merging jewels again. There's no way he would risk killing himself for that. He's done something else and I don't know what." Phil said.

"Maybe he got a got someone else to wear that jewel and control the other villain." Dream suggested.

"But why only two villains? Why not more?" Phil said, scratching his chin in thought. The three of them were silent.

"One more question." George said. "Why does the Blade want our jewels. They aren't destructive, he already has the Ruby. Why does he need them?"

"See that... I still don't know. I've spent years researching the jewels, travelling to find out their meanings and purpose. But I don't know." Phil said.

"Is he just after the Emerald and Sapphire?" Dream asked.

"He also wanted the Diamond. I thought I was being smart, only having two heroes that he could potentially take the jewels from. But as my research has shown, the previous gemstones work better together, and I had to employ Sapnap with the Diamond to help you out. It's not good, because the Blade now knows I am still active, and that the Diamond is in circulation. Although, Sapnap doesn't keep it, I do. It's like insurance that even if Blade defeats the two of you, we have a backup." Phil explained.

"So he wants all four precious jewels. They must do something when you have them all because I can't see why he wants or needs a stupid shield for example." George said.

"It's not a stupid shield, it's cool." Dream mumbled.

"I don't know. I'm sorry, I have no clue. But I'm certain that whatever it is, it can't be for good. The Blade is doing everything in his power to get the jewels. I doubt it's just a fun hobby."

George hummed in thought. If Phil didn't know, then how would they ever find out?

"It's getting late. We can discuss more another time, but I think I addressed the most important things." Phil said.

"Wait, one more. Why didn't you want us to know who you were? And why didn't you want me to find out even though G knew." Dream said with a small frown.

"Look, I'm sorry. But it for the protection of the jewels. It's dangerous you both know now, but it's too late. The main concern was that he could force the information out of you somehow. And I thought that maybe if only one of you knew, it would be safer. But GNotFound rightfully put me in my place. You guys are a team, and you both deserved an explanation." Phil said.

Clay looked at G, who was looking down.

G had stood up for him. Again.

"He really is perfect for the Sapphire." Clay said softly. George looked up and his cheeks went slightly pink. Clay's eyes went wide when he noticed. "You blushed."

"No I didn't." George scoffed, turning his head.

"You did."

"I'm just not good at compliments, ok?" He said. Clay grinned and put an arm over his shoulders again.

"It's ok. I'll give you many more compliments." He said. George huffed and tried to push him off, but Dream didn't budge.

"Oh. Phil. Can we get your phone number so we can contact you if we need?" George asked. Phil hesitated.

"I don't know if that's a good idea. If anyone sees your texts..."

"We can talk in code." George said.

"Hm. Ok, we can try it." Phil said, getting a piece of paper and writing his number of them both and handing it to them. "Also, if you are in superhero forms, call me L. Don't say my name. And if you ever come here, you must arrive in your civilian form first." Phil said. Both of them nodded.

"Is there anything else you two wanted to ask? Or let me know?" Phil asked them. George pulled away from Dream and looked at him.

"I don't think there's too much else that needs to be discussed right now. I can't think of anything really important." George said, but was watching Dream.

Dream needed to tell them about George.

"What about you Dream? Anything important?" George asked. Dream glanced at him, and then looked at Phil.

"No... no I don't think so." He said. George narrowed his eyes.

"Nothing?" George asked. Dream turned to look at him again.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" He said.

"You can't even see my eyes." George retorted.

"You're being weird. No. I can't think of anything else important." Dream said, turning back to Phil.

"Ok. Well, GNotFound, do you want to follow me?" He said. George nodded, but still watching Dream carefully. Dream needed to be the one to tell Phil about George Davidson possibly being a target. And tell GNotFound too.

"Goodnight G." Dream called. George gave him a wave, but followed Phil to the other room. And he detransformed.

"I really am sorry, again. But I hope giving you the answers you wanted may have helped." Phil said. George nodded and stuck out his hand to shake Phil's.

"I've forgiven you, Phil. Have a good night." George said, and left the store, plugging his earbuds back in.

Phil reentered the room with Dream, who was looking at the cold hot chocolate still on the table.

"He didn't finish the drink." Clay said. Phil sat down opposite him.

"Is there something you want to tell or ask me?" He asked. Clay looked up, nervously. Does Phil know he's hiding something?

"Uh... no..." Clay said slowly.

"You can detransform now if you want." He said. Clay nodded and said the command, now in his civilian clothes.

"Are you sure?" Phil said. Clay nodded. "What about why I chose you?" He said.

"Oh." Clay sat up. "Yes, actually. Why did you chose me for the Emerald? I didn't even know you when I got it." He said. Phil nodded.

"Yes. You were new to the city, with your father as Mayor. I remember seeing you and your family on Tv and I was curious as to what being a child of Mayor Block would be like. I wondered how similar to him you were, since most people are like their parents."

"I'm nothing like my father." Clay said with a scowl. Phil nodded with a small smile.

"Yes, I know. I went to one of the first Mayor's addresses. I took my two sons, Wilbur and Tommy with me. I thought it would be a good learning experience for them to see what the Mayor does. You were there, along with Drista on the stage." Phil said.



*"Clay, I'm bored." Drista whispered to him.*

*"Me too. It'll finish soon though." He responded, looking back at the crowd that his father was talking to. He was discussing something along the lines of a lockdown in the city, for the villains. Clay was always confused why they moved to the most dangerous city in the country.*

*They were up on the stage, the main one in the city. He still wasn't used to all the eyes looking at him. It made him uncomfortable.*

*"Fuck the government!" A random man shouted from the crowd, interrupting Mayor Block who looked furious.*

*"Who was that? Arrest him."*

*Clay looked into the crowd, but couldn't see anyone.*

*He felt on edge. Like he was being watched. But everyone was watching him, so he had no clue why he felt his hair stand on end and goosebumps litter his skin.*

*He turned and looked at the building closest to them, seeing a figure in the window, but his face was in shadow.*

*"Father!" Clay shouted, jumping up and sprinting at his Dad, grabbing his arm and pulling him backwards.*

*The second he did, a sizzling ball of liquid had landed where the man once stood. Clay turned back to the window, seeing the figure pull some device back inside, and disappear.*

*"It's a villain!" Someone shouted, and chaos ensued.*

*"Drista." Clay said, turning back around and grabbing his sister, dragging her off the stage.*

"You noticed something was wrong before it even happened. You saw your father was going to be shot before even his security did. And then you went to protect your sister." Phil said.

"There was a figure in the building. I saw him." Clay said. Phil nodded.

"You did. And you acted instantly, intuitively. I watched you for a while, mostly on the news glances. Half the time you were just messing around with your sister in the background. But the other half you were noticing everything. *Everything*. A single noise, or person would grab your attention. It was like you couldn't pay attention to one thing. But your attention to detail is what makes you intuitive. You gather enough information to just trust your instincts." Phil said.

Clay thought about it. He did get distracted a lot. Sometimes he couldn't focus on the thing he was meant to, but it was because he was focused on *everything* else.

Maybe he should mention that to Puffy.

"So I chose you as the Emerald. You had great intuition, you wanted to save everyone, and I noticed how loving you were. With your father who appears sort of cold, you still love him. And your sister of course. Your heart is very big, and it's clear how much people mean to you."

"Thank you, Phil." Clay said, slightly pink from the overwhelming praise.

He thought about his father.

Would he save him today like he had a year ago? It was without hesitation then, protect his father, protect his family.

Now his instincts were to protect the people, protect the city. It extended far beyond just his family.

Clay couldn't find a reason to hate his jewel.

## Chapter End Notes

Jesus that was a lot of information. It's probably very overwhelming but if you have any questions or need clarification, let me know and I'll answer what I can.

Also I love hearing people's theories. Like why do you think Blade wants all the jewels?

Also thank you all so much for 20k hits! It means a lot <3

# Men don't cry

## Chapter Summary

Clay is forced to sit in another meeting with his father and the superheroes. The problem is that he can't be Dream while being the Mayor's son.

## Chapter Notes

TW// abuse  
(skip the start until you see the bolded alert)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Uh. You wanted to see me, father?" Clay asked at the door to his office, his school bag on one shoulder.

"Yes. Sit. We have a meeting." Mayor Block said, gesturing to the chair Clay sat in last time. There was no one else in the room at the moment.

"But I'm going to be late for school. It starts in half an hour."

"It's alright, I've excused you until the meeting is over." He said. Clay still didn't move.

"What is the meeting for?" He asked.

"You'll see."

"Is it with the superheroes?" He asked. Mayor Block pointed yet again at the chair.

"Sit, Clay." He ordered. Clay still didn't budge from the doorway.

"I don't want to be here if it is. I should be at school, not watching you argue with superheroes. I have assignments due and finals coming up and-"

"This is your future. I'm sure one day off school will be fine. It is important you learn what being an adult is like, what being a man involves."

"But. I should be at school. Like GNotFound said... I'm just a kid." Clay said.

In one swift action, Mayor Block picked up a glass pencil holder and threw it with as much force as he could at Clay.

Clay tried to jump out of the way, but it shattered against the wall behind him, glass spraying everywhere.

He felt a sharp stinging on his cheek, just below his eye which was squeezed shut. He was frozen.

He heard his father's chair squeak as the man stood up, and Clay's eyes snapped open, immediately backing away from the Mayor.

"How *dare* you repeat what that fucker said. He is a teenager, he has no idea how to parent a child, how to raise a son." The Mayor said, and grabbed the collar of Clay's shirt tightly. Clay closed his eyes, holding his breath as he tried to compose himself.

Clay was silent.

"Apologise."

"I'm sorry." Clay whispered, and felt the grip on his shirt loosen, and he let out a breath.

His father turned to walk away, and Clay brought a hand up to his cheek, where blood was trickling down his face like he was crying.

He didn't expect the sudden punch his father threw as the older man spun back around and hit his son 'for good measure' as he has said before.

Clay fell to the floor from the impact, his hand once again going to his face, where he was hit. He looked up at his father with eyes tearing up from the pain. *Don't cry don't cry.*

"Don't fucking cry. Men don't cry." His father said, looking down at him. Clay broke the eye contact, looking down at the ground in front of him.

"I'm sorry." He whispered again. His father scoffed and walked back to his desk.

"Clean yourself up and sit in the chair. We have a meeting to run."

•

## **ALERT**

**GNotFound and Dream requested at Mayor's office**

•

George's jaw was tense with anger as he stormed through the mansion. What did this fucker want? He told him to only call for emergencies.

George didn't even bother knocking, just opened the door and immediately crossed his arms.

"What was so important that you called a meeting at 9 in the morning. I know this is your job, but I have things I need to do too." George said, not caring anymore for politeness. If the Mayor wouldn't treat him with respect, why should he?

"Once you get off your high horse, you'll realise that this is important. Once Dream arrives, I'll explain. Now sit, GNotFound." The Mayor said.

George finally took in the room, and turned to see a boy with his hood up, looking at the notebook laying in his lap, sitting near the desk. George's eyes narrowed and his jaw clicked as he turned back to the Mayor.

"Absolutely not." George said, pointing at Clay. The Mayor rolled his eyes and looked up.

"I'm in charge here. I say he stays."

"Do you not remember what happened last time? Or is your goldfish brain too small to recall? I refuse to sit while a teenager is here." George said.

"Well then I guess you'll have to stand." The mayor said, looking at George with a smile.

"Clay. Shouldn't you be at school." George said. Clay finally looked up and George's eyes went wide.

Clay's eye was swollen with light bruising, and he had a bandage on his cheek. George immediately walked over to him and looked closer.

"What the hell happened." George demanded. Clay chewed on his bottom lip, avoiding eye contact at all costs.

"Fell down some stairs." The Mayor said nonchalantly. George looked at the Mayor, then back at Clay.

"Is that true, Clay." George asked him. Clay looked into the goggles and nodded.

"Yes."

George stared at him for a bit longer.

"Fucking hell." George muttered, then grabbed Clay's notebook and threw it onto the floor, and pulled the boy to his feet, taking him by surprise.

"What are you doing?" The Mayor said, also standing.

"Clay is going to school, like the teenager he is. I do not want another argument with you, I want him gone. Whatever you wanted to discuss with me and Dream can be done in private. I'm not wasting more energy on this stupid argument." George said, and pulled Clay with him out of the room, the Mayor seething in anger but not doing anything to stop it.

George didn't stop outside the door though, he pulled Clay all the way through the mansion to the front door.

"How did you get hurt?" George asked, as they left the building. Clay shrugged, looking down at the ground.

"Stairs." He mumbled.

George reached forward and pulled the hood off his head, making Clay look up.

"Are you ok?" George asked. Clay nodded again. "You don't have to go to school. I just wanted you out of there. Take the day off, go walk through the city or something." George said.

"Would you join me on a walk?" Clay asked with big, hopeful eyes. George paused. He wanted to. He really wanted to.

"Thanks for the offer... but I can't just go for a walk with the Mayor's son who is ditching school. Plus I have this meeting. Maybe get a friend to join? I'm sorry, Clay."

"No. It's ok. Thank you, G..NotFound." He said. George gave him a small smile.

"Anytime." George said, and went back into the mansion, all the way to the office once again, taking a deep breath before re-entering.

"You have some nerve to do that." The Mayor said, his face red with anger as he typed on his computer. George didn't respond, and sat in his usual seat.

"So what was this about?" George sighed, pressing a hand against his forehead. He had the worst headache.

"This morning I received another message from the Blade." The Mayor said. George's eyes went wide and he sat up straight.

"Is it a video? What does he say?" George said.

"Like I *said*. We shall wait until Dream arrives." He said. George groaned.

"You understand there is no guarantee we can come when you call. We can't risk losing our identities and we may be in sticky situations." George said.

"I expect you to find a way-" The Mayor was interrupted by a quiet knock on the door.

Dream entered the room, and quickly sat down beside George, not looking at him. George could only see his right eye.

"Finally. Right. Now I can play the footage." The Mayor said, typing on his computer and pressing on the remote to the projector.

"I'm glad you're here." George whispered to Dream, who gave a small smile back, but didn't look at him. George furrowed his eyebrows. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just don't particularly want to be here." Dream said. George nodded.

"Understandable."

On the screen came a now familiar sight. Blade was in view, his shiny crown, bright pink hair and hog mask all on display to make George feel uneasy. Dream's jaw dropped.

"That's what this meeting is about?" Dream said, in shock. The Mayor clicked play.

"Dream. GNotFound. I want you know how impatient I am growing. Last message, I said to you that if I don't get the Liberator's name, and both your jewels, I will create doomsday part 2. But alas, I have none of the above." He started.

George was tense, terrified for what would happen next.

"It has been made even more obvious that the Liberator is alive, and that you know who it is. The third superhero that helped you out... I know the Diamond was given to him by the Liberator. It's quite pathetic really, for him to hide behind some teenagers." He said.

"I am growing more powerful by the day. I'm sure you were confused by the two villains the other week. Well, just proof of my power. And it's growing." The Blade grinned.

"However, even though *I* have no weaknesses. I know you have yours. And since we've known each other for quite some while, I'm beginning to learn what they are. Or rather... *who* they are." The Blade grinned.

George internally groaned. So the Blade knew. He knows Dream knows who George is. If the Blade can figure out how to get George Davidson, then that would certainly be a mess.

George took a deep breath and looked at Dream, putting on a poker face.

"What is he talking about? How can he know who our weaknesses are?" George asked, hoping to prompt Dream to reveal the information he already knows. Dream swallowed and shrugged.

"I have no idea." He said.

"You have both failed to willingly give up your jewels. I'm growing impatient. I do not care for anyone's life. I do not care for this city. You don't want to know what I'll do. Make this easier for everyone, and hand over your jewels and the name of the Liberator. It's that simple." The Blade said.

"People are going to start getting hurt. This isn't just a game anymore. This is war. And the Blade doesn't lose. The Blade never dies." He said, and the video cut off, the screen going black.

George turned to the Mayor who was watching them both carefully.

"Tell me the reason why you can't give him your jewels?" The Mayor said, propping his elbows up in his desk and threading his fingers together, staring intently at the two of them.

"Because he is the bad guy. You don't give the bad guy what he wants, he clearly wants it for something." George said, in an obvious tone.

"They are just jewellery. And your powers aren't even destructive. What could he do with it?"

"We don't know. But we know it's probably not for good."

"I say you give him your jewels. He stops sending villains, and you guys stop annoying me." The Mayor said.

"Are you insane?" George laughed. "There were villains before we became superheroes. Do you really think the Blade is going to stop once he gets our jewels?"

"He might."

"No, he won't. This man is evil. He is destroying the city for two pieces of jewellery and someone's name. It can't be for nothing."

"Do the two of you know who the Liberator actually is?" The Mayor asked.

"No." George lied quickly, looking at Dream. "We don't. We got our jewels with a simple letter and have no contact anymore. We've tried finding them, with no luck."

"That Sapnap guy. The new hero. He would know, would he?" The Mayor asked.

"No, he probably got a letter too." George said, although he was pretty sure that may not be true.

"This is ridiculous. You are both failing. Your job is to protect the city and the Blade is going to destroy it." The Mayor said.

"We will always be here to protect the city. We will fight everything he sends at us." George said.

"That's not good enough. I am making the executive decision for you to both hand over your jewels. It's for the benefit of the city. The Blade won't tear the place apart. He'll get what he wants and leave us alone." The Mayor said.

George and Dream both stared at the Mayor.

"Alright. Take it. Take my ring." Dream said, daringly. George snorted.

"Yeah, come on, sir. Come grab my pendent." George said. The Mayor scowled and stood up, reaching forward to grab the pendent, but George simply moved away.

"Give them to me." The Mayor swiped at Dream's ring.

"You know you can't. Don't even try. We have the same goal, Mayor Block. Don't try and sabotage yourself. You'll destroy the city in your path." George said, walking backwards out of the room with a wave. Dream grinned and followed, closing the door behind them and jogging through the mansion to leave.

"Somehow that was the most peaceful exit we have had after a meeting." George laughed.

"Even though he dared to take your pendent." Dream joined in laughing.

"I doubt his stubby fingers could even pry off your ring." George added.

The pair left the mansion and walked down the quiet street.

"But seriously. What do we do? How do we stop the Blade? We don't know how to find him. We can't just let him keep making the moves, sending his pawns to us. We need to attack rather than just defend." George said. Dream sighed, kicking a rock.

"I have no idea."

"And what did he mean by our weaknesses. Like he said there are people who are our weaknesses. Who could that possibly be? He doesn't know our identities or who we care about, right?" George said, giving Dream a side eye, who still wasn't looking at him completely.

"Maybe he thinks we care about the Mayor? Since we have contact with him." Dream said casually, but his voice was higher pitched than usual.

"I mean, if the Blade thinks we would save the Mayor, then obviously. I know that guy is a horrible person, but I'd still save his life, like everyone in the city." George said.

"Then maybe that's what he means. He knows we have moral compasses. Maybe he is talking about people in general, and how we would do anything to protect them and the city."

"That's what he is already doing. He is taking advantage of civilians and hurting others. Why would he specific that in the video if there wasn't an exact example of someone who is a weakness. It doesn't make any sense." George said.

"Yeah. Um. Anyways, I need to go." Dream said. George softly groaned, then nodded. He's given up on Dream.

"Yeah. Me too. See you." George said, Dream waved, and ran away, still somehow not giving George complete eye contact. *It must be the guilt.*

Or maybe it really just wasn't a big deal. The Blade could be talking about how they would do anything for anyone. Not in particular George. Maybe he was just being self-absorbed, assuming the Blade was talking about his and Dream's friendship.

His and Dream's friendship. Did he really just call it that? A couple of awkward chats on a roof



does not equal friendship. To Dream, George was just some random civilian he felt bad for. It wasn't enough of a relationship for him to be that important.

George transformed back and checked his phone. Missed messages from a few of his friends, particularly Nick questioning why he wasn't at school.

•

"Clay?" Puffy's slightly confused voice was fronting a kind smile as the boy stepped into her room wringing his hands together.

"Sorry I didn't book. I didn't know I would be coming." He said.

"That's ok. I'm free for half an hour, or would you prefer to book a full hour another time?" She asked.

"Could I talk now?" He asked. She nodded and gestured for him to sit, as she closed the door behind him.

"How has the week been? You been using that fidget toy?" She asked, grabbing her iPad and sitting down across from him.

"Oh. Yeah. Here." He said, taking the cube out and holding it in his palm to give it to her. She smiled and pushed his hand back.

"Keep it for another week if you'd like." She said. He nodded and immediately started fiddling.

"Is your eye and cheek ok? What happened?" She asked, eyes looking at the bandage.

"I fell down the stairs this morning, hit it against the beam." He said. Puffy nodded, writing a short note on her iPad.

"Does that happen often? Falling down the stairs? Running into things? Last week you needed stitches for hitting the dining table." She commented, gesturing to his forehead.

"I'm a clumsy guy." He said. She pursed her lips together and looked at him.

"I'm going to ask this because it's my job. I'm not saying you are lying or anything. But is everything ok at home?" She asked.

"At home? Yeah, of course. Why wouldn't it be." Clay said, growing tense.

"It's easy to keep things hidden behind closed doors. Do you feel safe in your home?"

"I'm fine." Clay said simply. "Father is strict, but he has to be because he's the Mayor. His reputation is based on me and my sister."

"That must feel like a lot of pressure. Does it feel like he puts pressure on you?"

"Yes. With schoolwork. He wants me to do finance, and I hate it. I want to do YouTube, maybe learn coding." He said.

"Does your father know that?" She asked.

"Yes. He said it's not a sustainable career. I have to go to college for finance." He said, his speed on flicking the switch on the cube picking up as he talked about his father.

"How often does he get upset or angry with you."

"Anytime we talk. We don't get along very well."

"And what do those arguments look like? What is he like when angry?"

"He yells sometimes."

"Do you yell back?"

"No, not really." Clay said. Puffy nodded.

"Does he ever do anything more than yelling? Has he ever put a hand on you?" She asked.

Clay took a deep breath, and kept his pace on the cube the same so she wouldn't suspect anything.

"No. Of course not. He's strict, but not like that." He said quickly, his jaw tensing. He didn't come here to be interrogated.

Puffy took the hint he was uncomfortable, and changed the topic of conversation.

"So what were you up to today? What subject have you had?" She asked.

"I only just got to school. Father has this new thing where he wants me to join in meetings. Twice now I've been there with GNotFound for a superhero meeting while they waited for Dream to arrive. But they argue too much about me being there, and GNotFound gets me to leave. Says I'm just a kid and shouldn't have to be there." Clay said, feeling relieved to be able to tell someone about it.

"GNotFound is right. Those must be intense meetings, and you have other things you should be doing." Puffy said.

"But it's frustrating because he is also just a kid, and my father yells at him too." Clay said.

*And he yells at Dream. At me.*

*I can't escape him.*

"That is also very true. I can't imagine the pressure on the superheroes. They are so young and have to sacrifice so much. I hope they are able to get some stuff off their chest too." Puffy said.

"It was a rough morning. GNotFound and father argued again and I got kicked out of the meeting. And now I'm here. I didn't want to go to class yet, I just needed some time to chill." Clay said with a sigh.

"Of course. This space is good for that, it gets you away from everything for a moment to slow down. Do you have friends in your next class?" She asked.

"Yeah, I have bio with George and Nick." Clay said. Puffy raised an eyebrow.

"Nick and.... George." She said with surprised eyebrows, making a small note.

"George sees you each week, right? For attendance too?" Clay said. Puffy looked at him.

"Has he told you that?" She asked. Clay nodded. "Yes, but I don't want to discuss other students and their sessions. This is about you." She said.

"I know. I just remembered that he sees you too." He said.

"Are you two good friends?" She asked. Clay nodded.

"Yeah. Well, I think so. He doesn't open up very easily and sometimes I feel like he is upset with me but I think he might just be an awkward person. He's great though, super nice. We became friends recently, although I've known him for a year. Nick is super cool too, he's really chill and funny." He said. Puffy nodded, making small notes.

"That's good you've made some friends with good people." She said.

"Has... George ever mentioned me?" Clay said.

"I can't discuss what we've spoken about. That's for him to tell." Puffy said patiently.

"Of course. Sorry." Clay said. Puffy smiled and shook her head.

"It's ok. It's easy to be curious. George must mean a lot to you if you care what he thinks."

"Well, obviously. I care what all my friends think of me. I like George and I want him to like me too." Clay said.

"As a friend?"

"That's what I said..." Clay said, eyebrows furrowing. Puffy nodded.

"Ok. Is there anything else you wanted to bring up?" She asked.

Clay thought about it. There was.

"There's... there's this person I like. A lot. But they don't like me at all." He said slowly. Puffy nodded, allowing him to continue. "I asked them out and they rejected me." He said, frowning as he recalled.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Clay. Heartbreak never feels good, it's ok to be disappointed or upset." She said.

"I thought I ruined things. I lashed out and got angry that they said no. They said they like someone else, and they said I don't know them well enough for us to be together. But I know enough. I'm in love with them. But they don't like me at all like that." Clay said, trying not to tear up.

Puffy's eyes squinted ever so slightly as she contemplated what he said.

"You asked someone out, they rejected you because they don't know you well, and you lashed out." She repeated slowly.

"Yeah." Clay sighed.

"Anger is also a natural feeling. But lashing out and hurting someone because of it is not ok." She said. Clay put down the cube and covered his face.

"I know. I apologised and we made up. They said it was fine, they forgive me. They also said something to me that hurt my feelings but they apologised for it too. I think we are in a good place. We know I like them, and they don't like me. But I think we are ok. For now."

"Your relationship is stable? That's good, that's progress." Puffy said, still writing a note.

"I'd rather have a friendship than nothing, but it still hurts they don't feel the same. They don't love me as much as I love them."

"People can't control their feelings. As much as it sucks, I think you might just have to accept that you and this person may only be friends for a while." Puffy said. Clay sighed and nodded.

"I know. But that doesn't stop me from wanting more." He said.

"Love can be a painful thing sometimes. Your heart is very big, Clay. I can tell you're a very loving person. I'm sure this person cares for you immensely, even if it is in a slightly different way." Puffy said.

"I know. It's just... it sucks. I wish I could know more about them." Clay sighed. Puffy smiled sadly.

"Well maybe start there. Instead of scaring the both of you, maybe just try getting to know them more."

"What if they aren't the kind of person to open up?" Clay said with a frown.

"Even people with the toughest exteriors have their weaknesses. It's hard to hide who you truly are for long. Anyone can open up if it is with the right person and the right circumstance." Puffy said.

Clay's mind somehow went to George. The boy who doesn't even share how much he sleeps, is simultaneously out and proud to the school. And George opened up to Dream.

"What if I'm scared to know more?" Clay asked softly, looking at the window, his mind going back to GNotFound.

"Are you worried that knowing this person more, may realise you don't love them like you thought?" Puffy asked.

"No." Clay paused.

"I'm scared I'll love them even more."

## Chapter End Notes

What time do I usually update for you guys? Is it an awkward time of day? I have no idea.

Also, I did a poll on twitter for which dnf book I should upload next because I've been working on a few.

Divergent au

Kidfic

Fantasy au

Royalty/high school au

The Royalty/high school au won, but if you have any more opinions here let me know. And all the stories will come out eventually, the voted one is just the one I'm going to try focus on a bit more.

Follow me on twitter (@Lottiarat) or here on ao3 if you wanna know when I publish a new story <3

Also if Dream wins the manhunt, the next chapter will have a George/Dream moment (it probably will anyways)

# Tell George I'll see him soon

## Chapter Summary

Clay discovers that George lied about where he was in the morning. Meanwhile, George meets Xavier's friends, and everything goes downhill at the park.

## Chapter Notes

### NOTE

I have officially changed Dream and GNotFound's costumes. They have hair now woooo. Dream's hair is unruly, bright blonde hair. George has near-black, messed up, slightly curly hair (imagine wet haired george)

I originally covered their hair because I thought I couldn't justify how they couldn't tell who the other person was. But they look ugly without hair and I can just change their colour, plus they are blind anyways.

So, now they have hair you're welcome :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Clay? You're at school?" George asked, not thinking too deeply about his question as the dirty blonde boy ran over. Clay sighed in relief when he saw George. He was so wrapped up in his own thoughts this morning that he completely forgot about his vow to keep him safe.

"Yeah. I know I was a bit late but I'm here now." He said, assuming George was just surprised to have not seen him yet today. George was more confused on why Clay was at school. He had told him to skip after the meeting with the Mayor.

"What happened to your face?" George asked again, his eyes trained on the bruised eye and bandaged cheek.

"I fell down some stairs. It's no biggy." Clay said nonchalantly. He seemed to be getting better at lying as the day progressed.

"Right. Well. Anyways, I would say avoid Nick for the day, but we have bio with him." George said, as the two of them walked towards their next class.

"Why avoid Nick?" Clay laughed.

"He's had a brilliant idea to go to a theme park this weekend. He's in the process of convincing everyone to go." George sighed. He had been sent multiple messages about it.

"I think it could be fun." Clay said. "Assuming i'm invited..."

"Obviously you're invited. But I don't know if I'm going to go, I don't think I'll enjoy it. There's a reason it was closed for a year. Imagine a villain attacks while people are on rides."

"It's not even in the city." Clay pointed out.

"It's close enough. Or what if there's an attack at the city and we aren't here." George said.

"Well, then that's safer, right?" Clay said

"It will kill me not knowing if my family is safe. While I'm just having the time of my life." George said with a sigh. Clay nodded.

"It would only be a day." He said, as they arrived at the classroom. Nick was sitting down already, grinning at the two of them.

"Where the hell have you both been?" He asked as they sat down. "Neither of you were here this morning or at recess."

"I had a meeting with my father, which ended early though." Clay started saying. Nick looked at George.

It looked suspicious that he was gone the same time as the meeting with the superheroes. He needed a plausible excuse.

"I had an appointment. With Dr Puffy." George decided to say.

Clay's eyebrows furrowed.

"What... what time?" Clay asked slowly.

"Um. I just finished. I was there for an hour. Before that, I was slightly late to school because my and my sister both slept in." George lied while pulling out his laptop.

Clay stared at George. If he didn't know better, he would assume George was telling the truth. He said all of it very nonchalantly with no hints of lying. He couldn't find what his tell was. But he knew it was a lie, because *Clay* was with Puffy when he got back to school.

George was a good liar.

"How was it?" Clay asked casually.

"It was good. Just talked about my attendance, as usual." George said with a chuckle. Clay wanted to laugh at the irony.

Where was George? What was he doing?

"Anyways. Saturday the gang is going to the theme park. And both of you are coming." Nick said. George frowned.

"I'm not coming."

"You have to." Nick said.

"Come on, George. It'll be fun." Clay said.

"Aren't the nearest theme parks shut because of the villains? I swear they've been closed for a year because they couldn't risk an attack happening while people were on rides." George brought up again.

"They are reopening. Because they know the superheroes can help if needed. Plus it's not technically in the city, so surely the villains don't attack." Nick said, a giddy look of excitement on his face.

"I don't like theme parks."

"Why? You aren't afraid of heights." Nick said.

"They just aren't that fun. And it's hot the whole day and everything is expensive. If I wanted the adrenaline, I could go run away from a supervillain." George said.

"Theme parks are epic. The food is good and it's so fun to scream with your friends. To be fair, I've only been to one in my life." Clay said. Nick grinned and slapped Clay on the back.

"This guy knows what he's talking about. You better say yes George or we are kicking you out the group." Nick said. George scoffed.

"You wouldn't dare."

"Try me."

"I'm not going, Nick."

"Well, if you aren't going. Then I'm not going." Clay said, leaning back in his seat. George stared at him.

"No, you should go."

"Too bad. I'm going where Georgie goes." He said.

George hid his blush with his hands.

George groaned and glanced at Nick who was beaming innocently at George.

"What if there's a villain?" George asked, muffled through his hands.

"Then I'll protect you, Gogy." Nick said, hugging George tightly, who was trapped. He tried to wiggle out, but Nick was strong.

"Ok. Fine. I'll come. But I might leave early if I feel like it." George said.

Nick cheered and Clay smiled.

"I'll come too, then." He said.

"It's going to be epic." Nick said.

George had a bad feeling about it.

•

Nick had another detention, so George ended up walking with Clay to lunch. They were discussing the biology content they learned, not particularly paying attention to the people around them.

Clay wanted to ask about where George was this morning. But George was preoccupied talking about the new content.



Until George caught the eye of a girl at the end of the corridor, watching the two of them. George paled slightly.

"What's wrong?" Clay asked, noticing how George had stopped talking.

"Nothing." He said, and then watched as Violet flicked her hair behind her shoulders, and started walking towards them. George started to panic, and he turned to Clay.

"Your ex girlfriend has it in for me." He said. Clay was taken aback.

"Huh?" He said with raised eyebrows.

"Violet doesn't like that I'm gay and hanging around you because she still likes you. She thinks I'm going to poison you or something. So she might say lies to you." George said extremely rushed.

"What-"

"Clay!" Violet squealed, jumping up and wrapped her arms around his neck. Clay was surprised, and he looked at George who crossed his arms across his chest.

"Hey, Vi." Clay said cautiously, prying her off him.

"Want to walk to the cafeteria with me?" She asked.

"I'm walking with George, but thanks." Clay said with a smile. Violet looked at George, then back at Clay.

"Clay, I'm giving you an out." She muttered.

"What?"

"You can get away from him." She muttered again. George raised his eyebrows. She knows he can hear perfectly.

"Uhh... I'm fine. I want to hang out with him." Clay said.

"Even though he's... you know..." She whispered.

"There's nothing wrong with being gay if that's your issue." Clay said, furrowing his eyebrows.

"George. Want to confess something to Clay?" She turned to the brunet. George stared back at her.

"What?" George said, putting his hands in his pockets like he didn't care. Even though he did.

"I think Clay deserves to know. It's not fair for him to not know." She said. George paused. It's not unfair, is it? George is gay and Clay isn't, is that bad? Is that unfair to Clay? Is it creepy?

"Whatever you're going to say is probably not true. I wouldn't tell you anything about my life." George said. Violet rolled her eyes.

"Clay, babe-"

"Don't call me babe." He said. She pouted.

"George has a massive crush on you. He's practically in love with you. I thought you deserve to know how much he's manipulating you. He's trying to make you gay as well." Violet said.

George swallowed. She was partly right. Clay glanced at George, then looked back at Violet.

"First of all, *if* George did have a crush on me, I wouldn't care. He can like who he wants, it doesn't make me uncomfortable. Second, *if* he did like me, he wouldn't try and manipulate me to like him back. He's not a bad person. And thirdly, George doesn't even like me. He likes someone else. I think I would know if George liked me like that." Clay said, looking back at George with a smile. George sent a small smile back, but looked away.

"He does like you. He does. He admitted it and it's obvious." Violet said. Clay gently moved her away from him.

"I don't appreciate you lying to me, Violet. George is one of my best friends and you shouldn't talk bad about him, especially to either of our faces. And there is nothing wrong with being gay. If you think there is, I can't be your friend." Clay said.

Violet turned to George. Her face was slightly red, and her teeth were bared at him.

"Thanks Violet." George said with no emotion in his voice. She growled and spun around, walking away. George sighed in relief.

"You said she would tell lies." Clay said. George slowly nodded. "You don't actually like me like that do you?" He said.

George looked at the taller boy. *Of course I do. How can someone not be in love with you. You're perfect, and sweet, and caring, and Clay.*

"Pfft. No, I don't. I like someone else, like you said." George said.

Clay nodded, feeling a weird feeling in his stomach as he recalled G saying those exact words to him also. *I like someone else.*

But he didn't like George either, so why did it sting a little when he said he didn't like him?

Maybe Clay just isn't loveable.

"Anyways. I'm starving." George said, continuing their walk.

"Can I... sit with you guys? Again?" Clay asked as they entered the cafeteria.

"Of course, Clay. You don't have to ask." George said, and Clay smiled in response.

When they arrived at the table, Tommy's face lit up.

"Gogy! Big C! Finally. I have something to show you guys. Where's Nick?" He said excitedly.

"He's at detention."

"Whatever, I'll show him later. Anyways! My older brother Techno is in town, and he got me a really cool gift!" Tommy said, standing up as George and Clay sat down.

"Why would he get you a gift?" Quackity asked.

"Because he's been gone for like 5 years. Travelling."

"Your father must be happy to see him again." Darryl said with a smile. Tommy's own smile faltered.

"Sort of. They had one fight, but it wasn't too bad. Techno is so cool. You guys should meet him! He's way cooler than Wilbur." Tommy said.

"Poor Wilbur." George chuckled.

"Well, it's the truth. Me and Techno always partnered up to pull pranks on people and mess with Wilbur. We were like... the most poggers partners in crime. Even though he is like ten years older than me. But it was epic. And he never let me take the blame anytime we got caught." Tommy said.

"You must have missed him." Darryl said, and Tommy nodded.

"But he's back! Hopefully for a while, and he brought me a present! I forgot where he said it was from though." He said, reaching beneath the collar of his shirt.

He pulled out a necklace. It was plain, just a simple small circle resting against his chest, nothing in its centre.

"Isn't it epic!" Tommy said with a grin, fiddling with it.

"Looks kind of lame to me." Skeppy said, and Darryl nudged him.

"I think it is very cool, Tommy." Darryl said. Tommy grinned.

"Can I look at it?" George asked, squinting at it. Tommy nodded.

"Yes, but I'm keeping it on. Techno said I should keep it on all the time because it has good energy. And something about it bringing me courage and confidence. And some dumb fancy word I couldn't say... vi-vita- i don't know." He said, puffing out his chest. Quackity snorted at that.

"Sounds like a load of garbage. One dumb plain necklace?" Quackity said.

George stood up and looked closer. The only reason he wanted to was because his mind first went to his own blank pendent.

But as he looked closer, and couldn't even see an indent for a jewel. It was flat, and plain, and just a circle.

"Can you take it off for one second?" Clay said. "We all want to see it." He added carefully, also intrigued, subconsciously fiddling with his plain ring.

"Hm. Ok, fine. But no one touch it. It's important." He said.

George watched carefully as he pulled it up over his head and held it out.

It stayed blank when Tommy held it. George sat back down, feeling stupid. Why did he even think Tommy would have a jewel? He was a kid, and not under any influence of the Blade.

Plus, Tommy said his brother gave it to him, not Phil.

George was just paranoid. Maybe George was just scared Phil would drag more teenagers into the war.

•

"Alright. You're projects are due today. One by one you will each present your code and what it

does. Who wants to go first? Get it out of the way?" Mr Parker said in computer science. George had finished his code and attached it to the fan remote the other day. Thankfully no one was too pressed that the fan wasn't working in this room.

"I'll go." Xavier sighed, standing up and taking his small Arduino creation to the front of the class.

Xavier went on to explain the process of the code, and how it works with the breadboard, wires and buttons. George was smiling as he watched. Xavier didn't know too much before they started talking, and now he understands the subject better.

He performed twinkle twinkle little stars, and a couple of other simple songs. At the end, everyone applauded, and Xavier looked at George with a grin.

"Great work, Xavier. Who would like to go next?" He asked.

No one did, so the teacher began by randomly choosing students. Xavier sat down back beside George and hugged him.

"I think I passed. Thank you for all your help, George. I can't wait to see your presentation." He said, pulling away.

"You did awesome." George replied with a smile.

A few students went, and then George was chosen. He walked up the front of the class with the remote, laptop and the Arduino extension.

"Hello, so today I've made an addition to this room's fan remote. This temperature sensor is the most important component, since the goal of my code is the turn on the remote when the room reaches a certain temperature. For this test, that is when the temperature reaches about 27°C, or 80°F. So now, I will demonstrate that." He said, placing it down on the table and checking his code.

"So currently, it is about 24°C. But if I make the temperature sensor warmer..." He placed his hands over it, so it would warm up.

After a minute, the fan remote made a beep, and everyone looked up to see the fan had turned on. George smiled and removed his hand.

"As you can see, it works! There were a few things in the code I had to consider-" He went on to describe his code and the Arduino parts he used. Until eventually, he finished his presentation, at the same time the fan switched off because it had cooled down again.

Mr Parker was smiling as he joined in with the class applause

"Excellent work, George. Quite advanced, I might add. It certainly has a very practical use to it. You can take a seat." He said. George smiled and went back to his desk, where Xavier offered him a high-five.

"That was amazing. I had no clue what you were saying half the time, but it was epic. If that's not an A+, I don't know what is." Xavier said. George blushed.

"Thanks." He said with a smile.

"Do you want to hang out with me and my friends after school? We can celebrate finishing this project." Xavier said. George hesitated. "It'll be fun. It's just me, Seb, Felicity and Darcy. We were

going to go hang out at the park." Xavier said.

George thought about it. It did seem nice.

"Sure. Why not." George said. Xavier grinned again.

"Awesome. We can meet them outside the school when class finishes." Xavier said.

•

"I don't really know them that well." George said nervously as they waited at the school gate.

"That's ok. They are all super nice. You'll fit right in." Xavier said, and George nodded in response.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Clay walking with his sister. George froze and moved slightly so Xavier was blocking him.

"So it was just the park, right?" He said. Xavier nodded.

"Hey, George!" He heard Clay's voice. George swallowed and looked over at Clay who waved. George waved back and Clay said something to his sister before jogging over.

"Hey Xavier." Clay added when he got closer.

"Hi Clay." Xavier replied with a polite smile. Clay turned to George.

"Want to play minecraft with me and Nick this afternoon?" He asked him.

"Maybe later." George said with an awkward nod.

"Yeah, we are going to the park." Xavier said to Clay, stepping closer to George. George made eye contact with Clay who raised an eyebrow.

"Oh. Cool." He said.

"You can join if you want." Xavier said politely. "George is nervous for meeting my friends."

"I am not." George retorted. Xavier chuckled and messed up George's hair.

"It's ok. But if you want, you can come Clay." Xavier said again.

"I have to get home. My father..." Clay said, not needing to finish his sentence about the mayor.

"That's ok. I'll... I'll talk to you tonight? For minecraft?" George said to Clay, who nodded, his eyes darting between the two, before saying goodbye and walking back to his sister.

Xavier stepped away from George slightly when Clay left.

"Thanks for inviting him, Xavier. That's was really nice of you." George said. Xavier shrugged.

"Clay seems cool. And you two are close friends, so I thought why not. Pity his father seems quite strict." Xavier said.

"Yeah." George said, his mind going to Clay's black eye and cut. *Sure the Mayor was a bad person, but he wasn't that evil, was he?*

"Xavier!" He heard a girl voice, and turned to see three people walking over. They all immediately

noticed George, and the girl's smile widened.

"George! How have you been? It's been so long." She said, jogging over with excitement and bouncy red hair.

"Felicity, wow, yeah, it's been ages." George said with a laugh.

"Can I give you a hug?" She asked. George nodded, and she immediately did. She was slightly taller than George, but her hug was nice.

"When I heard you and Xavier were friends I was so excited. We haven't had any classes together since middle school." Felicity said, pulling away.

"Felicity, can we be introduced too?" One of the others said with a laugh. They were a brunette, with glasses and olive skin. And with bright blue eyes that George noticed instantly.

"This is George." Xavier said. George held out his hands.

"I'm Darcy." They said. George shook it and smiled slightly awkwardly. "And this is Sebastian." Darcy to the other brunette, who was the same height as George, maybe scrawnier and with brown eyes. He also had glasses, along with freckles, and a thin smile on his face as he shook George's hand too.

"It's nice to properly meet you both. I think we might have had some classes together?" George said, letting go and looking at Darcy, who nodded.

"Yeah, we have. Maybe freshman english. Although Seb is new this year, so probably not him." Darcy explained. George liked Darcy already, with a nice smile and a relaxed front. Seb however seemed tense, and staring George down with a strange look in his eye.

"I don't think I ever got a chance to congratulate you on coming out, George." Felicity said, and George looked back at her.

"Oh. That. Yeah. Thanks?" He said with an awkward laugh. He still didn't know how to respond to these kind words.

"It was amazing. Being the first openly queer person in the school. Made me proud to be who I am too." She said. George raised an eyebrow slightly in curiosity. "I'm a lesbian." She added with a smile.

"Oh, that's great! Wow, thanks for telling me. I had no idea." He said. She laughed.

"I'm not that subtle about it. Don't you remember our conversations in math where I would point out all the prettiest girls in our class?" She said. George snorted.

"I thought you were trying to set me up with them!"

"Bitch, they were mine!" She said back with a laugh.

"I also want to congratulate you. I can't imagine how hard it was, especially that first day. I'm non-binary." Darcy said to George.

"Oh, that's great. I'm sorry, I don't actually know anyone who is non-binary. What are your pronouns? I don't want to get it wrong." George said. Darcy smiled.

"I got by they/them. And I'm not surprised you don't know anyone, given this school isn't

welcoming enough for people to express themselves." Darcy chuckled.

"Yeah, it's quite upsetting." George commented.

"Alright. Should we head to the park?" Seb finally spoke.

So the group started walking. George was feeling more relaxed now that Felicity had broken the ice. Darcy was cool too, asking about what subjects George did. Seb was quiet, and talking to Xavier who was mostly trying to listen to the main conversation.

Eventually, they reached the park, and Felicity and Darcy raced each other to the swing that didn't have the child safety chain on it. George laughed at them, and looked at Seb and Xavier who were talking.

"They always race to that swing. It's their favourite." Xavier said to George, shaking his head with a fond smile.

"I can see that." George laughed, gesturing to the swing which Felicity was on. Darcy was pushing her quite harsh, but Felicity was just laughing.

"Seb, why don't you go stop Darcy before they push Felicity off completely." Xavier said to us friend. Seb looked between Xavier and George, and then walked away without a word, leaving the two of them.

"Your friends are really nice and welcoming." George said. Xavier smiled.

"I told you that you would like them." Xavier said.

"Yeah. But... does Seb like me?" George asked, looking over at the swings to see Seb leaning against the pole, his brown eyes trained on George with no emotion on his face.

"Of course he does. He just takes a while to get used to new people." Xavier said, swinging an arm around George's shoulders. The action made George blush slightly as he was pulled closer into the taller boy's side.

"It's refreshing to know that there are more people part of the community. I had no clue Felicity was gay." George said.

"I'm sure there's other people who are hiding themselves too. Maybe even some of your other friends. It's scary admitting who you are to everyone." Xavier said. George considered it

"My gaydar isn't very good." George said, making Xavier chuckle.

"It doesn't have to be. People will come out, in due course. When they are ready. You don't have to investigate, I was just saying how sometimes it's not obvious. People are good at hiding themselves, at keeping secrets." He said.

"That's for sure." George mumbled.

Suddenly, a scream was heard, and George spun out of Xavier's grip to see where it came from. On the other side of the park was a family, who were backing away from a villain in a dark yellow colour. They had a stick, that looked like a magician's wand, and when they waved it, dust came shooting out.

It hit the entire family, and they all fell to the ground. George's eyes went wide. *Are they dead?*

*They can't be dead.*

He felt a tugging on his arm, to see Xavier trying to pull him back to his other friends so they could run. There was chaos, everyone was screaming.

## **CODE RED**

**A villain putting people into a deep slumber they can't be woken from. Currently at Wickham park. Everyone is to go inside immediately. Call for Dream and GNotFound**

George checked his phone as Xavier pulled him. What were the odds he was in the exact park as the villain?

Slim. Oddly slim.

His phone started ringing, it was Clay. He answered it.

"George, this way!" Xavier shouted, trying to get everyone towards the fence entrance they came from.

"George. Please don't tell me the park in the alert is the one you went to." Clay said in a serious tone.

George was about to reply, when Felicity's scream cut him off. The villain had appeared in front of them, a grin on their face and the wand tight in their grip.

"It's dust. Hold your breath!" George yelled at them all, running in front and pushing everyone else back. He dropped his phone in the process.

But the dust that exploded out of the end covered all five of them. No amount of holding his breath could stop it was entering his system. George felt his eyelids grow heavy, and his body fell limp as sleep took over him.

"George? George!" He heard a faint voice come from his phone somewhere on the ground. But George didn't care. His body welcomed it easily.

Well, maybe he could finally get some quality sleep.

•

The man was standing in the alley nearby, watching the commotion and checking the time. It had been five minutes since everyone in the park was bewitched. And his earring had buzzed twice.

He looked at the teenagers on the ground, the one particular brunette catching his eye. This was the George his last villain identified. The one Dream had called by name, the one he had saved and was worried would get hurt.

The Blade wasn't 100% sure they knew each other that well. Dream probably has met a lot of civilians, shook a lot of hands and saved a lot of pathetic lives.

But he had heard Dream's yell himself. The way he screamed George's name, the way he almost threw himself instead of his sword in front of the beam. The way he pulled George out of the street,



desperate to get the boy to safety.

They were a similar age. It was possible they were friends. It was possible this George Davidson knew Dream. Knew the *identity* of Dream.

But he wanted to test it first. He needed to be sure this was a boy Dream would go out of his way to save.

So that's why he left George lying in the dirt with his friends. It was bait. Bait to see how Dream would react.

And oh, did he react perfectly.

When Dream eventually stumbled upon the park, only a minute or two later, he was startled by the number of sleeping people, all looking suspiciously close to death. He spun around, his sword out at the ready. But the villain was nowhere to be seen.

He turned and saw a group of teenagers, all asleep by the edge of the park, and he ran over. He recognised a few from school, but one of them stood out. The small brunette who looked incredibly peaceful as he dozed.

"George, wake up!" Clay said, bending down and poking his shoulders. He pressed hard, knowing pain should wake anyone from sleep, even those with sleep medication.

But the boy didn't stir.

"Shit." Clay muttered, standing back up and looking around. He should get these bodies to safety. They were out in the open, exposed, weak. Especially George, who was a possible target for the Blade.

He picked George up first, arms tight under his knees and around his back. The brunette's head lolled against his chest, his long brown hair falling in front of his face. Clay smiled slightly at the thought of George finally getting some sleep.

He turned, looking for a nearby store or shelter to move all the people in. This should keep him occupied until G gets here to help.

But something caught his eye in between two apartments. An alleyway, one he frequently uses to transform in.

But there was someone else there this time. Someone who made Clay's stomach drop. Who's deathly stare made his blood freeze and his heart stop. He wasn't hiding well at all. He wanted to be seen. He wanted Dream to see.

Clay looked down at the boy he was holding.

*Oh I fucked up big time.*

When he looked back up, the Blade had disappeared. Clay sucked in a sharp breath and turned to start running with George.

But when he turned, the man with the pig mask and red mantle stopped him, a trident out in front of him, the spikes pointed at Dream and George.

"Blade." Clay breathed, stepping backwards in fear. He never expected to ever *see* the man. Let

alone face him without his partner.

"Dream." The Blade grinned.

"Stop what you're doing. You're destroying the city for nothing. You're hurting innocent people. Please, stop." Clay said.

"How good to finally meet you Dream. Who are you under the mask?" Blade asked, inching closer with his trident. Clay backed up more, careful not to step on any sleeping people. He subconsciously tightened his grip on the sleeping boy in his hold.

"No one. I'm just Dream." Clay said.

"I have a feeling *this* boy might know. You've taken a liking to him. There must be a reason you know his name." Blade said.

"I've saved him once or twice. I know a lot of people's names." Clay said, his voice wavering as he thought about what to do.

"But you care for this one; *George Davidson*."

"Oh, is that his last name? Funny. I had no clue." Clay said. The Blade scoffed.

"You'll regret ever caring for him, for anyone. For ever caring about this fucked up city. And it's fucked up people. Hand me your ring, or I'll make your life, George's life, and this entire city's life miserable." The Blade said.

"George did nothing. Neither did the city. Take it out on me and GNotFound. It's us you want, isn't that right? There's no need to get anyone else involved." Clay said.

"It's too late, Dream. You were the one who got him involved." Blade said, gesturing to the sleeping brunette.

Clay instinctively held George even closer at the gesture, adjusting his hand to pull the sleeping boy's head closer to his chest.

"I won't let you hurt any more people." Clay said.

"I've barely started." The Blade grinned.

His earring started flashing rapidly, and he didn't even flinch. Blade knew he didn't have long. That's why he didn't waste time on a fight.

"Tell George I'll see him soon." The Blade laughed, turning around to walk away.

Clay quickly put George on the ground, snapped his sword, and charged at his enemy's back.

The Blade turned and met his sword with his trident, pushing him backward with the force.

"I wouldn't test me right now. You're alone, Dream. With vulnerable people around you and another villain to fight. I am stronger and more powerful. And you've left your little friend alone." Blade said, looking behind Dream.

Clay heard a noise behind, and immediately spun, charging at the dark green villain standing nearby, eyes trained on George's unconscious body.

Clay ran at them, a battle cry erupting from his throat. His sword met their wand, taking them by surprise. He pushed them backwards towards the fence line, and used his strength to shove them against it. The villain jumped to the side and ran, waving the wand behind them, an attempt to make Dream go to sleep.

Clay ran a different way. "Project." He muttered, sending his projection back in line of the dust, and making it fall to the ground as if it was him.

Clay hid behind the slide nearby, and watched as the villain turned around, their unhidden eyes lit up in excitement as they ran forward to the sleeping 'Dream', to take off his ring.

While distracted, Clay ran out, wielding his sword, and he used it to flick away the wand, which flew several feet away, and he dove on the villain, knocking them to the ground.

He grabbed the bright earring and ripped it out, cringing slightly at the torn earlobe it caused. But he was too pumped full of adrenaline to care.

There was a woman lying there now, in regular clothing and a confused and pained expression on her face. Clay sat her up against the fence, and instructed her to wait until the police and medics arrived.

He sighed and stood up, clicking away his sword.

He turned around to see everyone in the park who was asleep, now waking up. A number of them looking extremely confused and still tired.

Clay immediately looked for George, who was still lying down where he left them, and he let out a sigh of relief.

But George wasn't awake.

Clay felt his heart stop for a moment, and he sprinted over, going to his friend's side. George was still breathing, in fact, he rolled over onto his side, mumbling.

"George!" He heard a voice, and looked to see Xavier, as well as a few others in his grade come running over. Xavier knelt beside George.

"Is he ok?" Xavier asked, looking at Dream. Clay smiled, looking down at the still peaceful George.

"He's fine. But exhausted. Seems like the sleep was actually good for him. I'll take him home, I know where he lives. This isn't the first time I've had to save Georgie here from a villain." Clay chuckled, reaching down to pick the boy up.

"It isn't?" The red-headed girl asked.

"Nope. He has a thing for danger, as I've told him." Clay said, smiling fondly at the boy who voluntarily curled closer to Clay's chest.

"I can take him home." Xavier said.

"I'll be faster. Plus, I need to go somewhere on the way. But you'll see your classmate tomorrow at school." Clay said, backing away slightly to leave.

"Friend. He's my friend." Xavier said. Clay paused and nodded.

"Right. Friend. Anyways. Lovely to meet you all. Can you make sure that woman gets to the police?" He said. They turned to look at the once-villain who was sitting there dazed.

"You're asking us, a couple of teenagers, to watch over a villain?" Another guy asked. Clay shrugged.

"I mean. That's what I was asked to do. And I'm a teenager." He said, and then turned and ran, not wanting to talk to them anymore.

He jogged through some less busy streets to George's house. He still got a few looks. He was *Dream* after all.

At some point on the trip, his ring buzzed twice. But he wasn't far from George's house.

When he arrived, he used his foot to knock on the door. It opened to Lorna, who's eyes went wide when she saw George unconscious.

"Oh my God."

"It's ok! He's ok, just asleep!" Clay said quickly. "He was bewitched by the villain, but I think he's so tired his body didn't want to wake him up yet. He can wake up if needed, but I think he should sleep longer. Can I come in?" Clay asked.

Lorna's mouth was wide open, but she nodded and stood to the side so he could enter.

"You... thank you, Dream." Lorna said.

"Of course, ma'am. I've had to help George a few times. He really does have a thing for danger." Clay chuckled, looking down at the sleeping boy again.

"He does. I don't know why he's still asleep though. He's been getting much regular sleep recently." She said. Clay hesitated. He had a feeling that wasn't true.

"Maybe he hasn't." Was all Clay said, before excusing himself to put George upstairs to bed.

He gently placed the boy on his bed, but George didn't let go of Clay's arm.

"Georgie. You need to let go." Clay said. George grumbled, letting go and rolling over. His eyes opened and squinted, looking at Dream.

"What?" He mumbled, his voice weighed down by exhaustion. Dream smiled.

"You're sleepy, George. Go back to sleep." He said.

"I can't. There's a villain..." George said, groggily about to sit up.

"Nope. I defeated it. It's ok, go to bed." He said, gently pushing him down by his shoulders. George nodded, grabbing the corner of the blanket and pulling it to his chest.

"I thought you couldn't visit me anymore." George mumbled. Clay's smile faltered.

"I can't. But that doesn't mean I won't come to save you." He said softly. George hummed in response.

"I don't need saving." George whispered. Clay chuckled, and leaned down, pressing a kiss against the boy's forehead without thinking about it too much.

"Of course you don't." He whispered against his face, the air brushing against George's eyelashes as he closed them once again.

"I'm a superhero." George mumbled. Clay smiled, brushing the hair out of the boy's face once before standing up.

"That you are, Georgie."

## Chapter End Notes

Getting bold are we, George?

Updated a day early because i'm busy tomorrow and won't have time. You're welcome I did it a day early rather than day late <3

Finally we getting to my favourite part of the story. Had this plot point planned for months. Got some epic chapters coming, stay tuned

And yes, new costume changes. Pretty sure I've changed any mentions in previous chapters but if you see any discrepancies, let me know

# Is he the boy you like?

## Chapter Summary

Dream has something important to say and George only knows the half of it

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George woke up at midnight, extremely confused and drowsy. His memories were foggy from the day, trying to piece together what happened and how he got home.

He did have a text message though the next morning, from Phil.

**L**

D wanted to see us both to tell  
us something. You free later today  
at usual place?

**George**

Sure. Send me the time I should  
get there

George sighed. He figured Dream must be finally telling them about the possible target on George's back. To be fair, nothing has happened yet. George wasn't targeted in the villain fight yesterday, he didn't think. He thought the Blade would use the opportunity to attack when he was unconscious. But maybe he didn't think Dream cared for George enough.

Because maybe Dream didn't really care.

*"That doesn't mean I won't come save you."*

The faint memory from last night came back his head, making George extra confused. He thought it was a dream that he had visited. But that kiss on the forehead felt too soft and gentle to be fake.

Did Dream actually take him home?

There was a knock at the front door, which snapped him out of his thoughts as he sat in the living room.

"George, can you get that!" His mother yelled from upstairs. He responded, and walked to the door, opening it while wiping his eyes.

"Hi George!" A cheery voice frightened him, and he jumped back slightly as he looked up.

Clay was standing there with a smile on his face and his bag slung over one shoulder, holding a

brown paper bag in the other.

"Clay?" George asked in confusion, looking back inside at the clock on the wall to make sure that yes, it was still 7:45am in the morning. "What... what are you doing here? How did you get here?" He asked. He noticed Clay's eye looked a little better, still bruised but less swollen. The bandage on his cheek was still the same.

"I wanted to walk to school with you! I get dropped off early anyways so I asked if I get dropped off here." Clay said. George blinked.

"But... why? Why do you want to walk with me?" He asked. Clay shrugged.

"I don't know. We have our first class together anyways, and I have extra energy. Plus I was super worried about you yesterday. You hung up the phone and I didn't hear from you until midnight." Clay said.

George had woken up to see some texts from Clay.

"I'm fine. To be honest, I have no clue what happened." George said.

"You don't remember anything?"

"Well, I was put to sleep, so no. I have some weird memories of getting home somehow, but to be honest, I think I was dreaming." George chuckled.

"Why?" He persisted.

"I swear Dream brought me home and put me in bed." George said with a laugh. It was so foggy that he had no clue if he was recalling a different time, last night, or made it up completely.

"Maybe he did? I heard he was the only one at the fight." Clay said. George bit his lip. He felt bad that he couldn't help.

"Oh. Sorry. You've just been standing here, come in. I'll grab my bag and then I guess we can go?" George said, turning around and letting Clay enter.

George walked to the kitchen, where his Mom now was.

"Who was at the door?" She asked.

"Clay. He was wondering if I could walk with him." George said, as Clay appeared behind him. Lorna smiled.

"Of course! Good exercise for you. How are you Clay?" She said.

"I'm good, thanks. How about you?" He asked.

"I'm good, I'm good. Wait, sweetheart, what happened to your eye?" She said, eyebrows furrowing and she walked closer.

"I fell down some stairs yesterday." He said. She narrowed her eyes.

"Did you apply ice?" She asked.

"Uh. No, but it's fine."

"It's still swollen. And what about the bandage on your cheek? What happened there?" She asked.

"Same incident. It's a small cut." He said.

"On your face? Have you put an ointment or something on it to stop a scar?" She asked. Clay looked between her and George.

"Uh... no I just put a bandage on." He said. Lorna sighed, and put her hands on the boy's shoulders, gently moving him to sit down. She then went to a cabinet and pulled out a small jar and a bandage.

"If you don't treat it properly, it could get infected or scar. Do you mind if I help?" She asked, looking back at him. Clay nodded, his cheeks red with slight embarrassment. "George, can you get an ice pack?" She asked.

"No, I'm fine. We are going to leave soon and I don't want to carry it." Clay said. Lorna hummed, but didn't ask again. She walked over and put the jar down.

"What's that?" Clay asked.

"Petroleum jelly, vaseline. Mom's cure for everything." George chuckled.

"George, pull up a chair. I need to go check Lexi is ready for school. Can you help him apply it and redo his bandage?" She asked.

George stopped laughing, slightly pale.

"Uh. Sure." He coughed, going to wash his hands. And then he moved the chair and sat down so he was sitting in front of Clay. Lorna smiled and shook her head, pushing the chair with George in it, closer to Clay, and their knees bumped together.

"You need to actually reach his face, George." She said, and then left the room.

George was avoiding all eye contact, by staring at the jar on the bench. Where Clay's knee was touching his own, it burned. It felt like fire was spreading through his limb.

"George?" Clay said softly. George looked up to see the smiling boy chuckling. "So how does the jelly stuff work?" He asked. George cleared his throat and reached out to grab the jar, slowing opening it with his slightly shaky hands.

"I, um, I don't really know to be honest. I think it adds moisture, so maybe it just like, helps heal?" He said, looking at Clay's bandage, still avoiding direct eye contact. "Can I take off the bandage?" He asked a bit softer. Clay nodded, and George carefully reached up, tenderly grabbing one end.

"Just rip it off. Make it fast." Clay said, closing his eyes and bracing for it. George took a second to look at his face. His eyes were scrunched slightly and he was chewing on his lip. George looked back at the bandage and quickly tore it off. Clay winced, but relaxed and opened his eyes.

The cut was bigger than George realised, a long thin scrape that he imagined is deeper than it seems. He had furrowed eyebrows as he tenderly brought a hand to Clay's cheek.

"How?" He asked, confused at how falling down the stairs could have caused it.

"I hit it against the beam. It split my cheek." Clay said. George removed his hand, grabbing the jar of Vaseline. It still didn't make sense, but he decided not to press. It was possible he hit it against



something else in the fall without noticing.

"It's ok if I touch your cheek?" George asked nervously, looking back up at his friend. Clay nodded with a smile, comically sticking his lightly freckled cheek out closer to George.

George swallowed and put some of the slimy substance on his index finger and thumb. And he hesitantly reached out to Clay, who was watching him expectantly.

George gently pressed his index finger against the healing scab and smoothed the jelly against it. Clay bit his lip at the initial twinge of pain, but didn't complain.

George was concentrating, being careful not to press too hard. His tongue was sticking out the tiniest bit in concentration as his index finger traced the scab. Clay smiled.

"You look cute when you're concentrating." Clay commented with a small chuckle. George froze, his cheeks immediately filling with a rush of blood.

"D-don't say things like that." He said with a laugh, swallowing his awkwardness. Clay sounded like Dream in that moment.

He was probably only used to compliments from Dream.

"Why?" Clay teased. George looked him in the eyes, adjusting his hand so his thumb was now brushing against his cheek.

"I don't like jokes like that." George said. He hated when people joked with compliments. Fake flirting, teasing. It never felt real. It feels more mocking. Like Dream. His off-handed compliments were just jokes to rile him up.

"It wasn't a joke." Clay said with a small frown. "You do look cute." Clay said. George looked deep into his bright eyes. A yellow to him, but green to most.

For as much as he avoids eye contact with Clay, he can't help but feel like he knows his eyes too much. They had depth and humour to them. They were swimming with hope and a twinge of sadness too. He knew these eyes well. But he was unsure how.

"Your eyes are really pretty." Clay then said, and George pulled his hand away from Clay's cheek. He cleared his throat and stood up, walking to the sink to wash his hands.

"Stop, Clay." George said.

"They are just compliments. Do you not like compliments?" He heard the boy ask. George stared at the flowing water as he washed his hands.

"Not when people don't mean them." He sighed, switching off the tap and grabbing the towel to dry his hands.

"I do mean it. I've never said a compliment I don't mean. To anyone." Clay said. George shook his head and put down the towel.

He walked back over and picked up the bandage, highly aware of how pink his cheeks must be and how shaky his hands were as he tried to peel off the sticky bit.

Clay grabbed George's wrists, stopping them, and making him look up into his eyes.

"Just because we are only friends doesn't mean I can't compliment you. You're beautiful, George.

You have got to know that. Any boy would be lucky to be with you. You're perfect in every way. You're beautiful, and kind, and smart, and caring and funny and sweet. You always put other people first, you always fight for what's right, you care for your friends and family, and you're just a great person to be around. Anyone with common sense can see that." Clay said.

*Then why don't you love me.  
Why am I not yours.*

George was pretty certain his heart had stopped then and there.

Clay let go of George's wrists, a smile still on his face.

"You deserve every compliment you get, because I'm certain it's all true." Clay said. George malfunctioned. He was staring at anything other than Clay.

He cleared his throat, finally peeling off the side of the bandage.

"Thanks Clay." He mumbled, bringing his hands up once again to Clay's face. He gently pressed the bandage against his cheek, smoothing out the bumps, and he pulled away as fast as possible.

"I'm sure this jelly stuff is great, but you know what my mother used to say would always heal things quicker?" Clay said, as George was screwing the lid back on the jelly.

"What?" He asked.

"A kiss. She always used to give my bruises and bumps kisses. They were boo-boo kisses. And they always worked." Clay said, his eyes reminiscent as he remembered his Mom. George looked at him.

"From what you've told me, your mother sounds like she was an amazing woman." George said softly. Clay sighed and nodded, then looked at George and grinned.

"Can you kiss it better, Georgie?" He pouted, sticking out his cheek and tapping the bandage with his finger.

George scoffed and pushed away his face, and turned around to put away the jar and throw out the wrappers. But mostly so Clay couldn't see his blush.

"Pleeeeeease. I'm not leaving this seat until I get a kiss." Clay said, crossing his arms across his chest.

"Well. Then I guess you now live in this kitchen then." George commented.

"I actually wouldn't mind that." He heard Clay mutter.

George also heard footsteps, and he turned to see Lexi come skipping into the room. She stopped and stared at Clay.

"Is Drista here?" She asked.

"No, she didn't want to walk to school."

"Oh. Fair enough. I'll see her when I go to the cafe anyways." Lexi shrugged, opening the fridge and grabbing her lunch. Lorna walked into the room and smiled at the teenagers.

"How did George do?" She asked, walking to check Clay's new bandage.

"He did excellent." Clay said with a smile.

"Mom, don't forget to pick me up at 3 exactly. I don't want to be late." Lexi interrupted.

"Yes, I know. I have the substitute teacher taking the last ten minutes so I can drive. Don't stress, Lex." Lorna said.

"Ok. Good." Lexi said.

"Late for what?" George asked, leaning against the wall far away from Clay.

"Lexi's starting a part-time job." Lorna said. George looked at his sister.

"You're old enough to work?" He asked. She scoffed.

"Yes. I'm fifteen, George." She said.

"You haven't considered a job, George?" Lorna said. George almost choked on air.

*Imagine.*

"No, I'm too focused on school. And I feel like I have no time otherwise." He said nervously.

"Fair enough." Lorna said.

"Anyways." George clapped his hands. "Me and Clay are going to go. Bye." He said, standing up straight.

"Ok, bye honey. I'll see you after school." She said.

"Actually, I'm busy. I'll make my own way home." George said. She nodded.

George walked over to Clay and waited for him to stand up too, but Clay just sat there with an innocent grin.

"Come on." George said.

"I'm waiting." Clay teased. George knew what he wanted.

"Why?" He asked, throwing his hands in the air.

"Because my mother always did. And no one has since I was ten. Please George." Clay said. Lorna and Lexi were confused at what they were talking about.

"You're ok with it?" George said slightly softer. Clay nodded.

"Obviously."

"Even though I'm-"

"I don't care you're gay, George. I want my kiss." Clay said. George blushed deeper, glancing at his family members who both stifled laughs.

"Will you shut up if I do?" He asked. Clay nodded, sticking out his cheek again.

George sighed, before leaning in and very quickly brushing his lips against Clay's cheek, pulling away as quick as possible.

Lorna and Lexi both laughed, and Clay stood up with a grin. George was staring at his feet with crossed arms and a red face.

"Time to walk! I bought a muffin for each of us." He said cheerfully, linking his arm with George and pulling him out of the room. He barely had time to say goodbye to his sister and mother.

As they walked down George's street, Clay pulled out the brown paper bag he had earlier. George wasn't paying attention though, he was staring at his feet.

"I wasn't sure what kind of muffin you liked. So I got a chocolate one and a blueberry one and you can pick." Clay said. George didn't respond, so the dirty blonde looked at him. "Hey, I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable..."

"Huh? No, you didn't. Sorry, I'm just... tired. Um, which flavour do you prefer?" George asked, looking up.

"I like them both." Clay said.

"Well, so do I." George said. Clay chuckled and held out the chocolate one.

"Here. You split that, and I'll split this and we can have half of each?" He said. George smiled and nodded, breaking the muffin in half and handing one to Clay.

"Thanks for coming. I still don't entirely understand why, but thanks. This is nice." George said as they walked. He only ever does this walk by himself.

"I just wanted to hang out with you." Clay said. George still didn't understand. *Why?*

He felt his phone buzz, so he pulled it out to check.

**L**

come at 3:15. D will come at 3:30

George switched off his phone quickly and pocketed it. "Who messaged you?" Clay asked curiously.

"Oh. Um. Just my friend." George said.

"Was it Xavier?" Clay asked. George blinked.

"Uh. Yeah."

"He seems nice. It was kind of him to extend the invitation to the park yesterday." Clay said nonchalantly.

"Yeah, he knows we are close and wanted me to be comfortable around his other friends I hadn't properly met yet." George said, swallowing. Why was this conversation so weird to him.

"Is... is he the boy... that you like?" Clay asked.

George paused.

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to. But I don't mind who you like. You're my friend, and I care about you and your crushes." Clay said with a slightly teasing smile, nudging George. George laughed nervously.

"Um. I don't know. Xavier's great but I'm not sure how much I like him. I've also decided I don't want to be in a relationship or anything for a while." George said.

"Really? What's stopping you?" Clay asked. George sighed

"I just feel overwhelmed already at the moment. And maybe I should be in a better place before I commit to something like that. I don't want to let anyone down." George said.

"You couldn't let anyone down even if you tried." Clay said. George shook his head, kicking a rock as they turned down a street.

"I'm pretty good at it, actually."

"I doubt it. I bet anytime you think you've let someone down, it was just a misunderstanding or you overthinking it." Clay said.

"Even if I lie to people?"

"I'm sure you have good reasons."

"You have too much faith in me. I'm not that great of a person." George said. Clay looked at him again. *How can this guy think he's not a good person.*

"You're one of the best people I know." Clay said. "I'm serious." He added when George scoffed.

"Alright, Clay."

"George." Clay sighed.

"Can we change the topic of conversation?" George asked. Clay hummed.

"Ok. I wanted to ask yesterday, but I didn't want to in front of Nick. Where were you in the morning?" He asked.

"Huh? I was late to school then saw Puffy before bio." George said, recalling his lie.

"I know that's not true."

"What do you mean." George said nervously.

"I was with Puffy before bio." Clay said.

George froze, but continued walking. He gulped, feeling the crashing weight of the lie falling upon him.

"You don't have to tell me if you want to. But I know you weren't with Puffy. You don't have to lie to me." Clay said with a shrug. George blinked as he thought about where to go from here.

"Um. Oh." Was all he could say.

"You weren't being hurt were you? Like by anyone in our school or anything, right?" Clay said

"No, no. I haven't been targeted like that since the stairs incident. There's been a lot of words and dirty looks, but no one has tried to hurt me again." George said.

"Ok. That's good..." Clay said, his question on the tip of his tongue, and George knows how curious he is. He sighed.

"I was so close to ditching school yesterday." George said softly, hoping his tone of voice makes it seem more serious, and not like he's unsure of himself. "Well, I suppose I did for a bit. Walking through the city. But I don't know, I went back. Decided it was lonely." George said.

"Why did you lie?" Clay asked.

"Because it's easier to lie sometimes. It's easier to lie than have to explain *why* I wanted to ditch. Why I didn't want to go school, why I came back. There's no why questions when I say I'm with Puffy."

"I get what you mean." Clay said. George nodded.

"You lie too." He said. Clay looked at him nervously. "That cut on your face. That wasn't from that fall, was it?" George said.

"Huh?" Clay brought a hand to the bandage on his cheek. "I'm pretty sure it was. I don't remember any other time it could have happened." Clay said. George took another bite of his muffin, something he's been slowly nibbling on as they walked.

"You can tell me if it's anything more important." George said.

"It's fine."

"Ok. I believe you." George said, glancing at the slightly uncomfortable dirty blonde.

Just two boys with secrets.

They eventually arrived at the school, and made their way to their lockers.

"George! Clay!" They heard a voice, and turned to see Nick with Karl, and they came over.

"We have a very important question for you both." Karl said, and Nick held up his phone.

"What are your love languages? Karl was telling me about them and we did the test." Nick said.

"Oh. Um, I don't know." George said, fiddling with his backpack strap.

"Do the test, come on! It's kind of interesting. Mine is words of affirmation." Nick said. Karl smiled and held up his screen.

"Mine is physical touch. I suppose that makes sense, I love hugs." Karl said. Nick grinned and wrapped an arm around his shoulders while checking his phone again.

"I don't get mine. I like being told nice things about me?" Nick said. Karl was smiling slightly, but shook his head.

"It also means you show your love by saying nice things to others." Karl said. Nick hummed, turning to Clay and George again.

"Come on. Both of you do it, I'm curious." He said.

George sighed, but him and Clay pulled out their phones and went to the website Karl told them.

George thought the test was dumb. It was meaningless questions that he sometimes struggled choosing between. But then it spat out a result.

"What did you get?" Nick said excitedly.

"Quality time. Well. That's a bit awkward since I don't have time for anyone." George snorted, switching off his phone in annoyance and putting it away.

How was his quality time if he doesn't spend time with anyone?

"Well, maybe it's because you feel loved when someone makes time for you? And you try your best to make time for others?" Karl suggested. George considered it.

"It still doesn't make sense. What did you get, Clay?" George asked.

"Acts of service." Clay muttered, also turning off his phone with furrowed eyebrows. "But I don't know how."

"Easy. You always do things for people, going out of your way to help." Nick said

"No I don't. I can't even stand up for my friends in front of my father. That's not very 'acts of service' of me, is it?" Clay said.

"Then it might mean that you value it even more when people do things for you, or stand up for you." Karl said with a small smile.

"This test was dumb." George said.

"Agreed." Clay said.

"Maybe you're both just dumb." Nick said.

"More proof it isn't real. Nick just insulted us and his was words of affirmation." George scoffed.

"Personally, I think that's his fond way of communication." Karl whispered loudly. Nick pushed him.

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"I was so worried." Xavier said at lunch. He had managed to get George by himself.

"I'm so sorry I scared you. My body was exhausted."

"You didn't wake up. It made my heart stop." He said. George hugged him, and Xavier hugged him back.

"Thanks for caring about me. And for telling me what happened. I didn't remember getting home." George said, still not pulling away from the hug.

"Yeah, Dream insisted on taking you. I wanted to but he said it was quicker." Xavier said, one of his hands on George's shoulder blades and the other around his middle.

"Thanks, Xavier. And I wanted to say again how nice your friends were." George said, finally pulling away.

"They loved you." Xavier smiled. George shrugged.

"I don't know about Seb..."

"Seb is just like that." Xavier assured him. He then looked over George's shoulder. "I'll let you get back to your friends. Clay keeps checking on you." Xavier chuckled slightly. George turned to see Clay looking at them, and he smiled when George turned. George sent a smile back before turning back to Xavier, his cheeks pink.

"He's worried about me. Thinks there are people still insulting me about being gay." George said.

"At least he's looking out for you." Xavier said. George hummed and looked up, seeing Xavier eyeing him curiously.

"Is Clay the boy you like?" He asked with a low voice. George's eyes went wide and he cleared his throat.

"Uh.. wh-why would you think that." George said with a laugh. Xavier smiled a slightly sad smile.

"I don't know. You just seem somehow awkward around him and at the same time extremely comfortable." Xavier said. George frowned, and then slowly nodded.

"I'm sorry, I've been trying so hard to get over him but I've liked him for a year and-"

"George, you don't have to explain yourself. Clay's great. I can see why you like him." Xavier said with a small smile.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't apologise."

"I need to." George said with serious eyes. "If you still like me like you said... then I know that it hurts hearing the person you like talk about their crush." George said. Xavier grabbed his hands and held them between them.

"I do still like you. How could I not? And yeah, maybe it hurts, but it's ok. I know how uncontrollable feelings can be. But like I said, I'm here for you George. If you get over him, I'll be here." Xavier said, and then he leaned in and gave George a kiss on the cheek.

The blush that formed across George's face was practically on instinct, and Xavier chuckled as he pulled away.

"I'll talk to you later?" Xavier said. George nodded, no words left in him as Xavier let go of his hands and walked away.

George stood there for an extra second, before running a hand through his hair and turning around.

His entire friend group was watching him, laughs and grins on all of their faces. George covered his face with one hand as he walked over.

"Everyone shut the hell up." He seethed through his teeth as he reached the table. He looked down at Clay who was the only one not teasing him. Clay smiled and gestured for George to sit.

"He's still bright red." George heard Skeppy snicker, and he retaliated by reaching over to punch him.



"George, please give us details. We are starving here." Nick said, and everyone nodded eagerly. George covered his face again.

"It's not- we don't-" George sighed. "I know what you guys think, and *no*, we are not a *thing* so stop with the teasing. We are just friends." George said.

"Just friends my ass." Quackity said.

"Language." Darryl chimed in.

"Gogs, he kissed you on the cheek and held your hands and you blushed." Tommy said with a grin.

"Deffo flirting." Tubbo muttered loud enough for everyone to hear.

"Stop. We are just friends. He was worried about me after yesterday. Just leave it alone." George said, his tone slightly more serious that everyone shut up.

"Wait. What happened yesterday?" Darryl asked, and Nick proceeded to tell the story on behalf of George.

George leaned back in his seat with a sigh, and turned to Clay who was watching him.

"Shut up." George muttered, wanting to blush again.

"I didn't say anything." Clay said simply.

"Are you going to tease me too?" George asked.

"No. Of course not." Clay said, breaking the eye contact and looking down at his phone.

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It surprisingly wasn't too difficult for George to get away from his friends after school. He had bio with Nick and Clay and they all left the school building together.

"So what do you have on this afternoon, George?" Clay said. George looked at him with confusion, then remembered he had heard him tell his mother that.

"Oh. Um. I am... hanging out with someone."

"Xavier?" Clay said, a raised eyebrow.

"Uh. Yeah." George said, realising that's the second time he's used Xavier as an excuse.

"A date? Oo Gogy." Nick said, nudging him. George sent him a look.

"It's not a- whatever. Just, I'm leaving. Bye." He said, waving goodbye to Nick and Clay. Nick's car had arrived so he left, but Clay turned and walked down a different street. George didn't even notice.

He walked towards Phil's store, checking the time as he went. It was a five minute walk, so he will be slightly early, but that's better than late.

When he arrived, the store was closed. But he knocked and Phil appeared and unlocked it for him.

"Hey, George." He smiled, allowing the boy to come in before closing it behind him.

"How are you, Phil?" George said to make conversation as they walked out the back.

"I'm good, I'm good." He said. George sighed and sat on the couch.

"Mask on." He said, and transformed. He put his school bag in a cabinet Phil unlocked for him.

"I'll get Dream to leave first, so he can leave his bag in the other room and yours can be in here."

"Do you really think we could reveal our identities by the brand of bag that we use?" George laughed. Phil didn't laugh though, locking the cabinet for George.

"So what did Dream say this was about again?" George asked. Phil shrugged, going to the kettle.

"Want a drink?" He asked. When George shook his head, he brew the kettle anyways. "Well, he just said he has something important to say, and it couldn't wait any longer. I have no clue, but he's not allowed to say it over text." Phil said, choosing a tea bag and a mug.

"Interesting." George said. Phil looked at him.

"Do you know what it's about?"

"No clue."

Twenty minutes later, there was a knock on the door and Phil left to let Dream in and let him transform. George sat there patiently, but was growing increasingly nervous. He had his suspicions, but he still wasn't 100% sure of what Dream was going to say.

When Dream entered, he smiled.

"I've missed you!" Dream said, falling onto the couch and pulling George in for a one-sided hug.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there yesterday. Got caught up and by the time I could transform, you had defeated them." George said, trying to pull out of the hug.

"All good, I had it mostly under control." Dream assured him, letting go and looking at Phil.

"So. Dream. You had something important?" He asked. Dream nodded.

"Can I sit there? I want to speak to both of you." Dream said. Phil nodded and they swapped. Phil now sitting beside George on the couch, and Dream sitting across from them.

Dream looked nervous. He was flicking his pen around his fingers and his leg was bouncing. George sat up straighter.

"Dream. What is it?" He said.

"Ok." Dream took a deep breath. "I should have told you guys when it happened, but I didn't want to make it a big deal if it wasn't even a big deal yet." Dream said. Phil's eyebrows knitted together.

"So. Um. Shit. I don't know how to start." He said nervously, running a hand through his bright blonde hair.

"Dream... what's going on?" Phil said.

"In the fight the other day... the one with the villain making people disappear. There was a boy who was in danger. I... I saved him. But... I called out his name before I saved him. And the villain

heard." Dream said.

So George was right.

"And... when I called out his name, I made it really obvious that I was scared he would get hurt. And I took him to safety. When I continued fighting the villain, she was teasing. Repeating his name and mocking me and she said she was going to tell the Blade that I knew him." Dream continued, still fiddling with his pen.

Phil's eyes were narrowed as he processed what Dream was saying.

"I know a lot of people's names and have saved a lot of civilians so I thought she was just messing. But yesterday... I made a really, *really* dumb mistake." He said.

George also furrowed his eyebrows at that. He had no idea what happened yesterday.

"Yesterday I saw the Blade." Dream said. And both George and Phil gasped.

"You... you *saw* the Blade. In person?" George said. Dream nodded.

"He set me up. He wanted to test if I actually cared for this boy I had named. The villain was putting people to sleep, and he had also been knocked out. Blade was waiting, wondering if I would react when I saw him. He was testing me. And I... I did exactly what he wanted." Dream said, his voice wobbly now as the nerves grew.

"Dream, what did you do?" Phil asked, his tone serious.

"I went to him first. And I tried to wake him. And I picked him up, to take him to safety. I was going to take everyone to safety. It was my goal until GNotFound turned up or I knew where the villain went. But I saw Blade in the alleyway, and he came and he fought me. He didn't have much time though, he was going to transform back." Dream said.

George's mouth was wide open in shock. He had no clue all of that happened, while he was passed out.

"He said he was going to hurt him if I didn't give him my jewel. It was a short fight, but he left because he was going to transform back, and I had to deal with the other villain." Dream said.

"Hold on. Dream. Blade thinks you care about this boy?" Phil said. Dream nodded.

"He thinks I know him as a civilian. And he thinks that he might know my real identity too." Dream said, not looking at either Phil or George.

"You showed the Blade a weakness." George mumbled.

"Are you out of your damn mind, Dream! You have not only put your life and this city's wellbeing at risk, but you have now put this boy in danger! How do you know him? Tell me right now." Phil said, anger rightfully showing.

"I don't know him extremely well, and he definitely doesn't know who I am." Dream said quickly.

"Then why do you know him? Why does the Blade think you care for him?"

"I... I've spoken to him a few times. As my superhero self. When there was no villains, and I was bored, I visited him. It was only three times I think. But I sort of built a friendship with him... as my superhero self." Dream said.

"You spoke to him three times, and you care for him that much?" Phil asked.

"There were other times. I've saved him a bunch from villains. Both those few conversations we had... I guess, yeah." Dream said.

"You cannot afford to have weaknesses like that. You cannot have people be your weakness. It was the main reason you can't tell anyone your identities. You have to keep your civilian self and superhero self separated. This is your job, but you have somehow managed to blur the lines. You have built a relationship with someone, who the Blade now knows is someone you care for. And now they are in danger, as well as yourself. And your partner." Phil said, gesturing to George who had been fairly quiet. Dream looked up at him.

"I know. I'm sorry."

"You made a massive mistake. I don't think you can just fix it." Phil said.

Dream hung his head again, hating the look Phil was giving him. *Disappointment*. Like his father always gives him.

"Why did you become friends with him?" George asked. Dream didn't look up.

"I don't know. He's a great guy and our conversations made me feel normal. At least... normal for a superhero." Dream said.

"Who is he? What's the name of the boy you have brought into this war?" Phil said.

Dream looked up, and George now noticed his eyes were slightly teary.

"George Davidson."

The silence that filled the air was suffocating. George became extremely aware of the distant clock on the back wall which ticked as each second that Phil took to process the information passed.

George swallowed, knowing that with the reveal of that name, that he was now in just as much shit as Dream when it came to Phil.

"George. Davidson." Phil repeated through his teeth, his eyes not leaving Dream's devastated face despite how desperately he wanted to turn to the blue superhero beside him.

Clay knows that Phil knows they are friends. He knows that Phil now understands why Dream became close with George, why he cares about the "random" boy more than he should with only a few conversations. He knows George better than that. And Phil knows why Clay cares so much.

"How did you let this happen." Phil said, his anger seething through his teeth with the words that somehow were aimed at George too.

George shrunk back in his seat.

"It just did. I wasn't thinking, I never do. But I swear, I'll fix it." He said.

"How can you fix it? You've fucked it up more than you think." Phil said, a laugh with no humour as the older man glanced at George, who shrunk even further against the brief gaze.

"I won't let anything happen to George."

"You can't guarantee that." Phil said.

"The both of us can." George piped in, finally giving Phil permission to fully turn to the other superhero. His face was red with anger and his eyes were flashing with a dangerous look. "Between the both of us, we can make sure nothing happens to him." George said.

Phil looked like he had had enough. He was the only man in the room, and the entire city, with all the knowledge of how fucked this situation is.

Yeah. Maybe choosing teenagers was a bad idea.

"I am... I am *furious* with you, Dream. You let your personal life get in the way of your job."

"Well, it was as my superhero self. So it's not like it's my *personal life*." Dream tried to defend himself, but he also shrunk back against the chair as Phil stared him down. It was sort of his personal life.

"I don't see anywhere in your superhero checklist where it says *befriend a teenager*." Phil said.

"Ok. I think... I think Dream knows how bad he fucked up. But it'll be ok." George said. Phil turned to him again.

"How could *you* let this happen?" Phil said to George, who froze.

"Hey, wait. G didn't know I was talking with George. You can't get mad at him. It's my fault." Dream said. Phil still didn't take his eyes off George.

"Anything else either of you want to say before the both of you leave my store." Phil said, clenching his fists.

He was angry.

But rightfully so.

*Someone* had to be angry at the mess they created.

"The Blade sent a video message to the Mayor. He said he knows for sure the Liberator is still in action, since you gave Sarnap the Diamond. And he said that since we haven't given up, people are going to start getting hurt. He's impatient and also said that he's grown to know us over the past year and... and our weaknesses. He said he's learning who our weaknesses are." George said.

Phil closed his eyes.

"Ok." He said, taking a deep breath. "I've had enough for tonight. Dream. You're leaving first, and I'd like a private word with you." He said, standing up. Dream stood up too, swallowing loudly.

"Dream, wait." George said. "Can we meet? Tomorrow?" He said.

"I can't until late." He said.

"Midnight?" George said. Dream nodded.

"Tomorrow, midnight. That school?" He asked. George nodded, and Dream gave him a small grimace before following Phil into the other room.

Phil closed the door behind them and turned to Clay.

"Detransform." He ordered.

"Mask off." Clay said immediately, scared he's going to be yelled at.

Phil just put his hands on his temples, sighing.

"Can you please elaborate on *why* the *fuck* you thought it was a good idea to befriend one of your real friends as Dream? You know the consequences, and now you've pulled someone you *actually* care about into this war." Phil said. Clay hung his head, nodding.

"George opened up to me as Dream more than myself or anyone else. I... I care about him and I wanted him to know he had someone who would listen without judgement. It was refreshing for me too, being able to sit and watch the stars in peace without the burden of being Clay or the pressure of being Dream. Existing with him was just... nice. I never meant for it to get out of hand. Or let the Blade know I know him. I wasn't thinking it through. My one thought every time I see George in danger is to just get him out." Clay said.

Phil looked at the boy who was slightly taller than him. How can such a tall guy appear so small when being chastised?

"I know you care about your friends, and I'm sure whether you had developed this relationship with him as Dream or not, you would still save him. But it doesn't matter what has lead to this point. You've made mistakes but now it's your job to make sure nothing bad happens. You've pulled George into this, so you need to keep him out. You understand?" Phil said. Clay nodded.

"Alright. Now get going. I'm sure you need to be home soon." He said, grabbing Clay's bag and handing it to him.

"Thank you, Phil. And I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier. I was scared." Clay said.

"You need to tell us these things. It's important. We are a team." Phil said. Clay nodded, and then said goodbye before leaving the store.

When Phil returned to the back, he turned to look at George, who was nervously sitting on the couch.

"Detransform. I want to have this conversation face to face with *George Davidson*." He said, sitting down in the chair Dream was in, facing George.

"Mask off." George said softly, his eyes now revealing how nervous he is as he looked at Phil.

There was a beat of silence.

"What the hell were you thinking." Phil said.

"I wasn't." George said, hanging his head.

"The fact that *you* are the one that he got close to. How could you let that happen? You know how important it is to keep your civilian life and superhero life separate."

"They were. I just... I have no clue how it happened. He caught me in a vulnerable moment and I cried and he let me and he listened to me. And then he came back. I'm not good with emotions. I don't even really tell my best friends when I'm upset. But I trust Dream so much already, so it kind of just slipped out." George said. Phil had a hand over his forehead as he thought.

"You already have a friendship with Dream. Why did you seek one as your civilian self?" He asked.

"I didn't seek it. It just happened. He only visited a couple of time outside of saving me. I didn't

realise that he actually cared. I don't know why, I'm just some random teenager he had the misfortune of meeting and hearing all the problems of."

"He really does care about you. Those chats you guys had... they meant a lot more to him than you think." Phil said.

"I don't get why. But then again, they meant a lot to me too." George said, covering his face.

"Do you realise what this means now?" Phil said. George sighed and peeked out through his hands.

"Sort of."

"The Blade may target you. If he captures you, the smart thing will be to use you as bait, as leverage. Dream will want to save you, as he would with anyone. But he would do more than usual for you, he could give up his *jewel*. But *who* is going to help Dream out of this situation?" Phil said. George looked down.

"That's right. GNotFound won't be there. Where is he? No one knows. You've made this situation even more complicated than Dream thinks. And you know what's worse?" Phil said. George braced himself.

He didn't think it could get much worse.

"The Blade could get information out of you too. You're a fragile civilian. And you have information to share. Sure, not anything about Dream. But you sure as hell know a shit ton about *GNotFound*." Phil said.

George wiped his face and made eye contact with the man.

"You are now a target as *both* identities, George. You aren't safe."

## Chapter End Notes

It's been a long week so here's a long chapter  
:)

# Running on rooftops

## Chapter Summary

G and Dream meet at midnight on the roof to discuss the safety of George, but somehow they turn the serious conversation into a game across the city

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Miss, please let us watch." Nick said to Mrs Arley who rolled her eyes.

"This is a senior math class and you want me to put the news channel on the screen?" She said, annoyed.

"It's important." Nick said. George was growing nervous, and he nudged Nick.

"What is it? Is there a villain?" He asked. Nick dismissed the thought by waving his phone.

"No. It's about the Mayor. Miss, please." He said. Mrs Arley was admittedly curious now, so she sighed and nodded, going to set up the news on the projector.

"What... what about the Mayor?" Clay asked, leaning over the aisle to look at George and Nick.

"Something about the election." Nick said. Clay leaned back, looking at the screen while chewing on his lip.

Once the screen came up, and Mrs Arley turned on the volume, George narrowed his eyes. There was a man standing in front of the camera, with a slightly shorter man beside him. The guy had short brown hair and was wearing a simple button up. The guy beside him was even more casual, a brown hoodie.

"Yes, so as I was saying. I am calling for an election where I will be running against Mayor Block. I have reason to believe that he may not be fit currently, and I want to remove him from office." The man said.

"Why do you believe he is not fit?" The reporter asked, holding the microphone out. George realised quickly that his Dad was the reporter, and he sat up straighter in curiosity.

"Well, me and my team are currently in the process of gathering evidence, but we have reason to believe Mayor Block is corrupt, and he got his wealth through illegal means." He said.

The class all gasped and stared muttering and half of them turned to glance at Clay. The dirty blonde sunk down slightly in his seat, eyes remaining on the screen.

"I want to become Mayor because I think this city deserves a fair leader, who lets children get off the stage before himself." The man said, a small scoff, everyone looking at Clay again. "And I want to work closely with GNotFound and Dream."

"The superheroes. Why is that a focus?" Mark asked.



"Well, they are clearly two of the only people holding this city together. They are incredible and selfless and to me, it doesn't seem like the Mayor acknowledges that enough."

"What about the Medal of Valor ceremony?"

"Well, yes, he organised that. But it took a whole year to finally thank them formally? Those two young men are a fundamental part of this city and I want to help them in stopping all these villains. Mayor Block has not once said what he is doing to help, and I think the city deserves some transparency." The man said.

"Would you like to reintroduce yourself to those who have just tuned in?" Mark said. The man turned to the camera with a kind smile.

"I am Sam Warden. I am running for Mayor, because this city needs someone who is honest, selfless and open. I don't believe the current Mayor is fit for the job and I think he has his priorities in the wrong order. This is my running mate, Callahan." Sam said, gesturing to the guy with the hoodie, who waved. "With the help of everyone, including all civilians as well as heroes, we want to stop these attacks by working together and staying strong."

"Thank you for your time Mr Warden." Mark said.

"Please. Call me Sam." He responded, and Mrs Arley turned off the screen.

Immediately, the whole class jumped into conversation, all talking about Sam Warden, and the current Mayor. George could hear the words "corrupt" and "unfit" and "selfish" flicking around the room.

George looked at Clay, who was staring at the table in front of him, trying to ignore everyone's words and the occasional glances at him.

"Everyone be quiet. I was nice enough to let you watch that, so now you will all be silent and do your work. Anyone talking will receive detention with me." She said.

George felt awful for Clay. But he didn't know what to do. It was the last lesson for the day, and Clay left the classroom before George could even say anything.

GNotFound had to meet with Dream tonight.

•

George sat on top of the school, transformed, and gazing up at the stars. He felt so tired, which wasn't any different than normal. But he regretted inviting Dream to meet yesterday after the meeting. He wished he was lying down in his bed right now.

It was just after midnight, not that George was keeping track. He decided that whether Dream came or not, he would sit here in solitude with the stars.

He missed looking at the stars with Dream. As George.

"Hey." He heard a soft voice behind him, and he looked to see Dream standing there, hands interlocked together in front of him. George smiled.

"Hey. Want to sit?" He said. Dream nodded and sat down beside him, legs dangling over the edge of the roof.

They sat in silence for a while, both looking at the sky.

*This reminds me of watching the stars with George.*

"How mad are you?" Clay asked finally, and George turned to look at him.

"What?"

"About me befriending a civilian as my superhero form. It was irresponsible and goes against everything we've discussed, about not letting the Blade know who we care about. I messed up, and I brought an innocent guy into this superhero battle. You must be mad. I messed everything up for both of us." Dream said, putting his head in his hands.

George sighed and looked away. "I'm not mad." He said softly. He felt Dream look up.

"You're... you're not?" He said.

*How can I be mad at you?*

"There's nothing wrong with caring for people, for making friends and trying to help people out. That's our jobs. We are here for every civilian. It was just unfortunate that Blade found out. But I don't think the identity of him matters. I think if any civilian was in danger, regardless if we know them or not, we would do anything to save a life." George said.

He turned to look at Dream.

"I can't be mad at you for having a heart. But it wasn't very bright of you to show it to the world." George said. Dream nodded slowly as he let the words sink in.

"It wasn't intentional. If I could go back in time--"

"Would you avoid talking to him entirely?" George asked softly.

"I don't think I could. But I know that I would fix ever bringing George into this. I don't think he even knows how in danger he is. I just wanted to protect him, but I've messed it up. It's my fault if he gets hurt." Dream said.

"Why did you befriend him?" George asked.

"We were both vulnerable when we met. He was upset, and I was stuck in my head. We were both lonely that night, and we talked like it was normal, like we knew each other. And I went back again. Because I crave being normal."

"You were Dream, a superhero. How is that normal? How could you feel *normal* with him?" George asked.

"He has a way of doing that, I guess. I like who I am around George." He said.

"What about when you're with me?"

"I also like who I am with you, but it's harder. We get so caught up in the moment, in fights. We barely get time to just... exist." Dream said with a sigh.

"Yeah. I get that." George nodded.

They were silent once again.

"Are things different between us?" Dream asked out of the blue. George looked at him with furrowed eyebrows that remained hidden behind his goggles.

"Different?"

"Since I told you I loved you. Did... did I make things different?" Dream asked nervously.

"Well. I don't know. I suppose things are always different when something new happens. But... you didn't ruin things, if that's what you were really trying to ask." George said, swinging his legs slightly.

"I wish I never said it. I meant every word, but I fucked it up."

"Then why did you?"

"I'm tired of keeping secrets." Dream shrugged. "It's exhausting holding everything in. There was only one person I could tell that I was in love with GNotFound. And that was you. So it just came out." Dream said, looking away from George's gaze.

"I'm sorry that I don't-"

"Don't. Please. Don't apologise. *I* of all people should understand that you can't control who you fall for." Dream said, interrupting George. "I'm sure whoever the boy is that you love... I'm sure he's great. And he's an idiot if he doesn't see how incredible you are too." Dream said.

"I'm not incredible." George said. Dream rolled his eyes at that.

"Shut up."

"No, I'm not as amazing as you think I am." George said. Dream scoffed and poked George in the stomach, making him jump away.

"Shut up."

"No. You shut up." George pushed him. Dream chuckled and pushed him back.

"Say that you're amazing."

"No." George said.

"Then say *I'm* amazing." Dream said with a grin. George scoffed and shook his head.

"God, you're annoying." George said. Dream gasped and pushed him, poking him in the stomach multiple times. George was ticklish. And apparently it carried over to his superhero self.

He pushed Dream off and stood up.

"Oh? You're ticklish." Dream grinned.

"What? No." George said, taking a step away as Dream took a step closer.

"Yes you are."

"Am not."

"Then prove it." Dream said, running forward to tickle him but George snapped his bow and held it

in front of him.

"Take another step and I shoot your stupid smiley face." George said.

"Brave words for a guy who claims they aren't ticklish." Dream laughed.

There was a standoff.

And then George turned and sprinted across the rooftop. He heard Dream's wheeze behind him and it made him laugh slightly too.

George launched himself off the school, and landed on another building, which he sprinted across. He briefly looked over his shoulder to see Dream behind him, still wheezing as he chased George.

"Go away, Dream!" George said, his heart beating fast but a smile on his face.

"Come here, G!" He cackled, gaining on George.

George had a quick run up, and jumped across the street to the other side, and climbed up the taller building to the top like a spider. He looked back to see Dream still on the other side of the street, watching him with crossed arms.

"What? Can't climb?" George said loud enough for him to hear. But the second Dream moved, he squealed and continued running, jumping from building to building.

The city was quiet, and mostly dark apart from a few streetlights on the ground and various building windows. He hoped they weren't too loud, but this city's civilians were used to noises at night.

George stopped, looking around. He couldn't see Dream anywhere. He tried listening for sounds, but heard nothing.

Until a click of a pen from behind alerted him. George spun around and brought his bow up to the tip of the sword that Dream was holding.

"Why have you drawn your weapon!" George yelled.

"You drew yours first, idiot!" Dream retorted, clicking away his bow and diving at George's legs. He tackled George, who fell to the ground and rolled to try and get out of Dream's grip.

Dream started tickling him, and George thrashed on the ground, screams of delight mixed with agony as he tried to kick Dream off him.

Tickles were a form of torture.

He swung out his legs and made Dream fall onto his side, and he took this chance to get up and run, by jumping off the building and onto the next, lower one.

"Get back here!" Dream yelled, his wheeze of laughter following. George ran, letting out small laughs of fear as he heard Dream following.

Jumping from building to building, it would appear that the young superheroes were actually having fun. No one ever got to see Dream and GNotFound outside of their villain fights. The sight of them messing around like the teenagers they are would bring a smile to anyone's face.

The smiles on the heroes themselves were something special. George and Clay never had to time to

mess around, act like fools and pretend that time doesn't exist.

George had lost Dream. After running around the city for half an hour, playing cat and mouse, he had managed to lose him.

He was on a roof top that was lower than others, tall walls of the buildings next to it rising well above its level. George was safe, about to catch his breath since there was only one way Dream would be able to get him, and that was from jumping across the street in front of him.

Well, George didn't factor in the possibility that Dream could be above.

George stood with his hands on his hips as he smiled. Was it possible he was actually having fun? While being GNotFound?

"Oh G..." He heard a low voice from above, and he spun around in horror, just as Dream fell, landing on top of him.

Clay pinned George's wrists to either side of his head, and was holding down the rest of his body with his own weight.

George tried to fight for a moment, before he realised how close they actually were, and he froze. Dream's mask was extremely close to his own face.

Neither of them moved. The position they were in was compromising... to say the least.

"Got you." Dream breathed, and he let one of George's wrists go.

But George didn't try to fight. Dream hadn't done anything yet, he hadn't tickled him.

Clay looked down at the boy beneath him, desperately trying to look into the goggles, attempting to see his eyes.

His hand came up to the goggles, and a finger traced the rim of them, imagining he could see a pair of brown eyes looking back up at him. Would they be chocolatey? Or slightly hazel? Maybe warm, or bright? Maybe they are a deep brown, near black.

George didn't realise he was holding his breath. He didn't know what he was doing. Dream was just tracing his goggles.

"Dream." He said softly.

A warning.

"Hm?" Clay hummed, his finger now travelling off the glasses to just below, on the cheek bone. There were light freckles here, more on one side than the other.

His hand traced across G's face, travelling across to just below his ear, where his jaw begin. And his finger slowly traced downwards, following the outline of the sharp jaw bone.

George watched Dream's eyes following his finger. "Dream." He whispered again.

A second warning.

"Yeah?" Clay whispered, still focused on the boy below him. Desperately trying to memorise him. The finger on George's face left a burning trail in his skin, making him shiver.

Clay brought his finger to George's chin, lifting it ever so slightly to watch the way his face tilts.

"Dream... don't." George said.

A third warning.

Clay lowered George's chin.

"I wasn't."

"Dream you... you're confusing me." George whispered.

Clay removed his finger from George's face, his green eyes raising to meet his partner's through the goggles.

"I'm confusing you." He repeated. George didn't move.

"Yes." He breathed, his chin now tilting up a minuscule amount without Clay's prompting.

"*I'm confusing you.*" Clay said again.

"Let me go." George said. Clay smiled, but it didn't have any joy in it.

"G. I'm not even holding you down." Clay said. It was true. He had let go of both of George's wrists, both beside his head like he had forgotten they were there. Clay was barely touching George, holding himself above the boy with his own hands.

George swallowed and finally moved, bringing his hands up to Dream's chest and pushing him off to the side and sitting up.

"You were going to kiss me." George said, turning to his partner who was sitting with his elbows resting on his knees.

"I wasn't." Clay said. Although he couldn't deny the thought was there. The thought of how perfectly their lips would connect, like they belong together. He would bring a hand up to cup his cheek, pressing deeper against the boy. His mask might knock the goggles securely attached to his face, and G may press his nose against his own smiley mask. But it would be perfect. It would be relieving. It would be... them.

"Why... why would you do that!" George said. He was flustered. He's never been in a position like that before. He has never been examined like that, as if he were delicate glass that could break under the wrong touch.

As if every line that was traced left a track of burning flames against his cold skin. As if he was being studied, opened, *cherished*.

"I didn't do anything." Dream said simply.

"You- I- stop! You-" George couldn't find the words.

"I'm confusing you. Right?" Dream said, a humourless chuckle following.

"Yes."

"How." Clay dared, standing up, arms folded his chest.

"You just- you just were!" George stood up as well.

"No, G. *You* are confusing *me*. You had every opportunity to push me off. To tell me you were uncomfortable, to do *something* other than just sit there and watch me. I was listening. I am always listening. You said my name, I responded. You never elaborated. I let go of your chin, you lift it again. You say I'm confusing you?" Clay said, taking a step forward with slight anger in his eyes.

George was silent.

"You say you don't have feelings for me? Then don't let me get close to you if you're just going to blame me when you change your mind."

"Dream-"

"I literally didn't even do anything. *You* made it weird." Clay said.

George was lost for words.

"So tell me, G. How was I confusing you? I think I've been pretty clear about how I feel." He said.

"No, I didn't mean that you *are* confusing. I meant..." George trailed off. Clay lowered his arms, watching his partner curiously.

"I mean you're making *me* confused."

Clay scoffed. "Same thing."

"No. I... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to react like that. I wasn't expecting it and didn't know what to do." George said, running his hands through his hair.

"Whatever, G." Clay shook his head, walking past him, preparing to jump off the building to the lower one. George stopped him, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm sorry. Please can we not fight again? Can we just put whatever that was behind us. I'm sorry if I confused you, I was just processing what was going on. Please don't be angry." George said.

He really did not want another fight.

"I'm not..." Clay took a deep breath. "I'm not angry. I'm just frustrated. I care about you so much."

"I care about you too." George said. Clay looked at him.

"Not as much as I care for you. But that's ok." He said quietly. George sighed, removing his hand from Clay's shoulder.

"I'm sorry." He said again. Clay shrugged.

"It's fine. I'm sorry too." He said.

George sighed in relief. Please no more fighting.

"Can I ask you a question?" Clay asked. George hesitated, narrowing eyes.

"Ok..." He said.

"If we ever defeat the Blade, can... can we... because there won't be any threats, we can, right?."

Can we... you know." Clay didn't know how to word it.

"Can we tell each other our identities?" George clarified, and Clay nodded. George sighed. "I don't know. I can't even picture that scenario."

"So? Can we?"

"Ask me again when I'm holding Blade's Ruby." George decided. Clay smiled slightly.

"That's not a no."

"Correct."

"Ok. I'll take that." He said, punching the air, making George smile and shake his head slightly.

"It's late, we should go home." George said. Clay nodded with a sigh.

"G. Will you help me, if George is ever-" Clay couldn't even finish the sentence. He was having trouble doing that tonight. George just nodded, wanting to hug Dream but deciding against it.

"I'll do everything I can to protect him too." He said.

"Thanks." Clay said. "I'm just scared that he'll get hurt and it will be all my fault."

"It'll be ok. George will be fine, I'm sure." George said, cringing at the irony.

"Yeah. He's like... the strongest person I know." Clay said. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"How have you figured that out from only a couple of conversations?" He laughed. Clay shrugged.

"I just know."

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When George got home, already transformed into his civilian self, he climbed up the tree and snuck back into his room, taking a deep breath as he did.

But the second he shut his window, the light in his room turned on, and he spun around to see his mother sitting on his bed, holding the pillow he had used to make it seem like he was sleeping. And his father was in the doorway.

George paled instantly, noticing the very annoyed and upset faces on both of his parents.

"George. Henry. Davidson." His father said. George looked away, anywhere but their faces. "Care to explain where you have been?" He asked.

"I... I'm sorry." He said.

"We almost called the police, George." He said. George closed his eyes.

"I didn't mean to scare you."

"Then where the hell were you!" His father's voice raised slightly.

"I was just going for a walk. I couldn't sleep and thought it could help." He said.

"You took your pills though." Lorna said and George cringed slightly. "You... didn't take them."



She then said, her voice stern.

"I wanted to see if I was better so I skipped a night." He said quickly, still not looking at either of his parents. "But I still couldn't sleep."

"Have you snuck out before?" His father asked.

George wasn't sure whether to lie or not.

"Not often." He mumbled, deciding they probably could guess it wasn't the first time by the way he climbed the tree and entered the room like it was a practised routine.

"You know how unsafe the city is, especially at night. And you didn't tell us where you were, or answer your phone. Do you know how terrifying it is to check on your kid and find out they are missing?" Lorna said. George looked at her and saw she was frowning.

"I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking."

"No you weren't."

"It won't happen again."

"That's for sure. Because you're grounded for a week. And a serious grounding this time. You go to school and you come home. Nothing else." Mark said. George looked at him with a pained expression.

"Dad-"

"Let's just talk about this in the morning once we have all got some sleep." Lorna said, standing up. She looked at George. He started to tear up at her disappointed look. He hated how sensitive he was.

"I'm sorry. Please don't ground me. I can't stay in here for a week, I need to hang out with my friends. We were going to theme park tomorrow." He pleaded. He didn't really want to go to the theme park, but he definitely wanted to be able to leave the house.

"You should have thought of that before you snuck out of the house and went for a *walk*." His father put quotations around the word walk, as if he knew that wasn't what George was doing.

"Until you tell us what you were really doing, then you aren't going to the theme park. And you most certainly are grounded." Mark added. George wiped his face.

"I swear I was just walking around. It's not like there's anything to do at this time. My friends are asleep, I was just walking. Please." He said.

"That's not a good enough excuse to sneak out." Mark said, voice raising again. Lorna put a hand on his arm to quiet him.

"Go to sleep, George. We will talk in the morning." She said, walking out of the door with her husband, reaching to turn off the light and close the door.

"I can't sleep." George sobbed, and his mother hesitated at the door.

"Then you should have taken your medicine." She said, and closed the door with a click. George slumped onto his bed, and put his head in his hand.

He knew they would notice eventually. You can't sneak out for a whole year without someone realising you aren't in bed. He should be surprised it took this long.

Being grounded is fair, for a teenager when they sneak out.  
But for a superhero, not so much.

But what could George do?

## Chapter End Notes

George and Dream's change of  
moods be giving me whiplash  
God, they are even confusing me. Pull it together.

Also you should check out my twitter where some more fanart of Super has been made  
and I retweeted :D  
@LottiaraT

Merry Christmas to everyone who celebrates it! <3

# Deathcoaster

## Chapter Summary

After being grounded, George still sneaks out to go to the theme park with friends. But as a new target for supervillains... the day goes *exactly* as you'd expect.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"I told you I can't come." George said softly into the phone, knees pulled to his chest as he glanced at his door.

"I know you're grounded but last time it didn't even matter. What did you even do this time to get grounded?" Nick replied.

"I snuck out. And this time they are fully mad. I can't come to the theme park, I'm sorry." He said.

"Come on, George. First of all, why the hell did you sneak out? And second, just sneak out again." Nick said. George rolled his eyes.

"Pandas."

"Gogy."

"I'm not coming. Everyone else can go, make sure Clay does too, even though he said he'd only go if I do."

"Clay can't come either! Said his father won't let him. This is bullshit." Nick exclaimed.

"I'm sorry." George said.

"Fuck this. Get dressed." Nick said.

"Nick, no." George replied, but his friend had hung up. He groaned and proceeded to spam messages at Nick, telling him not to come.

The door to his room opened, and George looked at his Mom.

"You don't have to keep checking on me. I'm not leaving." George grumbled.

"I just wanted to check if you're ok." She said. George rolled his eyes, and luckily his Mom wasn't too strict about his rudeness.

"Nick is upset I can't come to the theme park. All my friends are. Clay isn't going if I'm not going." He said. Lorna sighed.

"Well, these are the consequences to your actions." She said.

"I know. And I'm sorry."

"Where did you go last night?" She asked.

"I told you. I just went for a walk, I swear. It was just for some fresh air and I didn't even go far." He said, putting his phone down.

Lorna sighed.

"You can survive a week of being grounded, ok?" She said. George sighed and rubbed his face.

"Whatever." He said.

"Alright. Well, I'm going out to meet some friends for brunch and then I have to pop into the school to prepare for a craft activity on Monday. Your father is at work, he's been covering a lot of extra shifts. Lexi is home though. And you are as well. Can you take her to swimming later at around 2?" She said. George looked at her.

"You're leaving me unsupervised?" He asked with mock surprise. His mother gave him a look.

"I'm trusting you, George."

"I know. I know." He said, picking up his phone again, seeing a new message and panicking.

**L**

You can't go to the amusement park

"Ok. Well, I'm leaving now. I'll see you later." She said. George nodded, a tight-lipped smile as his mother left the room.

**George**

Don't get your panties in a knot.  
I'm grounded anyway

He sighed and was about to switch off his phone, but it started ringing. Clay was calling, and it made his heart beat extra fast.

"Clay?" He said nervously when he picked up the phone.

"George! Are you still going to the amusement park? Because I'm not allowed but I want to go and I need to know if you're going or not because I can sneak out if I need-"

"I'm not going, I'm grounded. A serious grounded this time." George said. He swore he heard Clay sigh in relief.

"Oh. Ok. Why are you grounded?" Clay asked. George sighed.

"I snuck out last night and my parents found out." He said.

"You snuck out? Why? What did you do?" Clay asked.

"I just went for a walk. I couldn't sleep and thought fresh air would help."

"Did it?"

"No."

His thought process was interrupted by a knock on the door downstairs. He stopped, listening.

"Lexi! Can you get that!" He yelled. There was another moment of silence.

"I'm in my pajamas!" She called back. George rolled his eyes.

"Fine!" He said, getting up and quickly changing into some better pants and chucking on a jumper over his plain shirt.

"What are you doing?" Clay asked, hearing George's conversation and moving around.

"There's someone at the door. Mom and Dad are both out so it's just me and Lex." He said, leaving his room, hearing a knock on the door again.

"Coming!" He called, going down the stairs.

"Wait, George, check who it is first. You shouldn't answer the door to strangers." Clay said quickly.

"I'm seventeen, not seven. But sure, I'll check." George said, nudging the curtain by the door open to look out first.

There was no one there.

"Huh. I can't see anyone." George said.

"Don't go outside." Clay said.

"I'm just going to check." George said, clicking the lock and opening his door.

"George, don't." Clay warned.

The second the door opened, his vision went black. A bag had been thrown over his head, and someone grabbed his arms. He dropped the phone in the process and yelled in shock.

But he reacted instantly, twisting in the grip and kicking his foot out to trip the person holding his arms. He then head butted in front of him, hitting someone in the face and they yelled. He used his now free hands to pull the bag off.

"George, what the fuck!" Nick said from behind. George turned and saw he was the one who was restraining him. He turned back to see Quackity on the floor, holding his nose and glaring up at George.

"I told you it was a bad idea!" Karl said, and George turned to see Skeppy standing nearby with his arms crossed over his chest.

"What the fuck, guys!" George said.

He heard footsteps from inside the house and turned to see Lexi arrive at the door, in her blue nightie. She sighed in relief when she saw the commotion was just George and his friends.

"We are kidnapping you to come to the amusement park with us." Nick said. George turned to him with a scowl, and then noticed his phone still on the floor, the call still going through. He picked it up.

"George!" He heard Clay yelling.

"I'm fine, sorry Clay. Nick and the other lunatics thought it would be a good idea to put a bag over my head and kidnap me." George said, giving a stern stare at each of his friends. He put the call on speaker.

"Fucking hell. You scared the crap out of me. I thought it was a villain." Clay said.

"George is grounded." Lexi said from the door, and George nodded.

"Are your parents home?" Quackity asked, standing up and still rubbing his nose where George head butted him.

"No."

"Well, come on then. You have to come, George." Karl said. George glared at each of them.

"I can't. I can't break my parents trust again. Plus, Lexi will snitch."

"No she won't. She ain't no snitch. Are you, child?" Nick turned to her. She flipped him off.

"Course not." She said. Nick turned to George with glee in his eyes.

"No, Nick."

"Are you guys going to kidnap me too?" Clay asked with a chuckle.

"Nick tried to plan it. But we remembered that you actually have security and shit." Skeppy said.

"I'm not coming, I'm sorry guys." George said.

"Let me propose a deal." Nick said, and George looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "You come to the amusement park. And none of us will ever bother or tease you about Xavier again." He said.

Everyone turned to George, including Lexi with raised eyebrows.

"That's... actually tempting. But I can't, I can't break my parents trust even more."

"AND..." Nick hesitated, trying to make the deal more enticing. "You get to decide when we come home. Plus Darryl's driving so you can blame him." He said.

"I'm not coming."

"How about... none of us will annoy you for an entire week. If you tell us to shut up, we will." Nick said.

"What!" Quackity said, hating the idea.

"I don't care. Nothing you say will change my mind." George said.

"Come on, Gogy! We are teenagers! And not for much longer. We are going to graduate soon and go to different colleges and grow up. Do you really want to spend your last few months of high

school just locked in your room while your friends hang out without you? We are young and stupid and free!" Quackity said.

George frowned and looked down.

His last year as a teenager has been anything but free. He doesn't feel like much of a kid, with the responsibilities of an adult.

"I know you're trying to guilt trip me." George said.

"Is it working?" Karl asked with a smile.

George glanced at Lexi. Who shrugged.

"I'll go for a couple of hours. I have to take Lexi to swimming at 2 anyway." George said, and immediately all three boys cheered.

"Wait are you serious?" Clay said from the phone. George almost forgot he was there.

"Screw it. Mom and Dad are out, and I don't want to stay cooped up in my room." George said. Nick grabbed his arm and immediately started pulling him away from the front door, giving Lexi a salute which she responded with a roll of her eyes.

"Lex can you cover for me?" George said.

"Only if you cover for me when the time comes." She said, closing the door behind her. George was pulled to the car waiting on the street, and shoved into the back. The very back, since it was a seven-seater mini van.

"Hey, George! I'm so glad you are coming!" Darryl said, turning from the drivers seat where he has been waiting. Skeppy jumped into the passenger seat. Nick, Karl and Quackity all climbed into the middle row, Nick turning to smile at George who was alone in the back.

"Why am I in the far back alone?" He asked.

"Because." Nick said, raising an eyebrow at the slightly neglected phone still on speaker. George could hear a lot of movement from Clay's end.

"Come by my house." Clay said. Nick nodded, as if he knew that was going to happen.

"What? But you're not allowed." George said.

"Like you said. Screw it." He said. Nick grinned and gave Darryl a new objective, and the car began to move.

"Clay, you don't have to come, I don't want you in trouble like I am." George said, taking him off speaker and holding it to his ear.

"I want to come. Like I said at school, I'm going wherever you're going." He said. George smiled and blushed, looking out of the window.

"Ok." He said back quietly. He didn't fully understand why Clay was so intent on joining because of him. But he wasn't mad about it.

"Who's driving the children?" Quackity asked.

"I think Tommy said his brother offered to drive him, Tubbo and Ranboo. They have a smaller car." Darryl said.

"Is that... Wilbur? Or Techno?" Karl asked.

"Techno. We might get to meet him." Nick explained. George was just listening to the phone, hearing Clay moving around, probably grabbing the things he needs.

"How are you getting out of the mansion?" George asked.

"I have my ways."

•

"Stop, Clay!" George squealed as Clay poked him in the side repetitively.

"You're so ticklish, what the hell." Clay said, and a small wheeze escaped his lips, giving George flashbacks to last night with Dream.

"He is very ticklish in the side." Nick said, turning to look at the pair in the back. George had his hands out defensively.

"I have discovered that." Clay laughed, poking George again.

"Alright, we are here!" Darryl announced, parking the car. George stared at Clay.

"Have mercy." George said. Clay chuckled but nodded.

"Fine." He said.

Everyone else got out of the car but Quackity was being annoying and not letting George and Clay leave the back row. Darryl had to step in to let them out of the car.

"There they are!" They heard a voice, and turned to see the three sophomores near the entrance to the park.

"About damn time. We've been waiting for ages." Tubbo said.

"Like fifteen minutes." Ranboo added.

"Boys! I want to introduce you to my brother!" Tommy said, grabbing a man's arm and pulling him over.

The guy was relatively young, with brown hair and minimal expression on his face as he looked at everyone. He wasn't too tall, maybe a few inches taller than George. He seemed like he was examining all the teenagers carefully.

Before his eyes finally met George's.

"This is Techno." Tommy said, throwing an arm around his older, yet slightly shorter brother's shoulders. Techno shrugged him off.

"Hi, I'm Darryl." Darryl said first, taking a step to shake his hand. "This is Skeppy, Karl, Quackity, Nick-" He started pointing at everyone who arrived.

"Clay Block." Techno said before Darryl could. Clay nodded, walking forward to also shaking his



hand. Techno stared at it for a moment, before accepting the greeting.

"That's me." Clay said with a smile.

"The Mayor's son." Techno said carefully.

"And that's Gogy!" Tommy said, pointing at George who scoffed at the introduction.

"Yes, George Davidson." Techno said. George froze, seeing the way Techno was staring at him.

"Uh. Yeah." He said. Techno walked forward and initiated the handshake, still watching George carefully.

"Tommy has told me all about you guys. All of you." Techno said.

"Same about you." George said, disconnecting their hands as quick as possible.

Techno seemed like a nice person. But the stares he was giving George made the hairs on his neck stand on end. It was like Techno knew him.

It made him very uneasy.

"Let's go get tickets!" Tubbo said, pushing Ranboo towards the line, and everyone followed. George walked over to Clay, eager to separate from Techno.

"Techno, are you coming?" Tommy asked his brother.

"Nah, I'll just wait for you guys in the car. Don't want to waste money." He said, before walking away.

They stood in the line for about ten minutes before all ten of them got their wristbands and entered the amusement park, finally being closer to all the screams they could hear from outside.

"Can we go on the deathdrop! Please please please." Tommy begged the group.

"And the deathcoaster!" Tubbo added.

"Why is everything death?" George asked.

"Can we warm up for those? I need to prepare my stomach for that kind of experience." Karl said.

"How about the log ride? That's always fun." Skeppy suggested. Everyone agreed and they went to find the ride, but Clay and George kept towards the back of the group.

"What if your father finds out you snuck out?" George asked. Clay gave him a look.

"And what if your parents find out too?" He replied.

"Right." George sighed. He knew he shouldn't have come. There was a very high chance they would know. "How's your cut?"

"Oh." Clay put a hand over his cheek, with a new bandage on it. "I bought some of that... jelly stuff your Mom had. And I changed it this morning." He smiled.

"I'm glad." George smiled back.

They began lining up for the ride, and George only just processed the fact that the seats are in

pairs. And everyone was already paired up, including him and Clay.

"Selfie!" Tommy yelled, holding up the phone with his long-ass arms at the front of the group. George groaned, but everyone bunched up. Clay put an arm around George's shoulders as he smiled at the camera. George felt a blush form in his face, but kept a smile on as the photo was snapped.

"Epic. I'm sending it to Phil, he asked for a photo." Tommy said.

*Fuck.*

"Tommy, wait!" George said, but Tommy already clicked send.

"What?" He asked defensively, as everyone looked at George.

"What if my parents find out..." George lied, already pulling out his phone in preparation for the angry text message he will receive.

"Phil won't send it to them, I don't think he even knows who your parents are." Tommy said dismissively, turning around as they reached the front of the line. The ride operator gestured for him and Quackity to get in, and the two of them glared at each other.

"No way it's the same groups for laser tag. Fuck this. I'm going with Tubbo." Quackity said, pushing Ranboo forward into the log with Tommy. Tommy made a sound of annoyance, but it was too late. Apart from those four, everyone else was in the same pairs. George and Clay were at the very back of the log, George still holding his phone.

"Sir, I suggest you put that away because there is a high chance you will get wet and it could get damaged." The woman said. George nodded and switched it off, putting it in his pocket.

The log began moving along the river, and George looked at Clay who sent him a smile.

Until Clay's phone dinged. He briefly pulled it and glanced at the person, before switching it off again and putting it away, a look of nervousness on his face.

"Not your father?" George asked. Clay shook his head.

"My... tutor." He said.

George heard a noise from his own pocket, but didn't dare pull out his phone.

It buzzed again. He winced.

"What if that's your parents?" Clay asked, nervous for George.

"It's not." George muttered, just as they went down a small hill, cold water splashing up the sides.

The whole ride was just George stressing about his buzzing phone. It wasn't enjoyable, even when they went down the large hill and a photo was snapped.

"George. Why do you look so depressed?" Tommy said, pointing at the screen of the photo at the end. George looked at himself, eyebrows furrowing at how he looks when he's stressed.

"George, quit stressing about your parents. If they find out, just tell them the truth. That we kidnapped you." Quackity said, slapping him on the shoulder.

"Surely the death drop now!" Tommy said in excitement.

Everyone looked at the tower, seeing the ride drop down and go back up constantly.

"Coaster first." Tubbo said, gesturing to the roller coaster that had a loop and many massive drops.

"I don't want to go on either." Karl mumbled.

"Let's take a vote. Hands on head for the drop. Hands on ass for the coaster." Nick said.

Everyone immediately voted, George not choosing either. Tommy, Quackity, Darryl and Skeppy voted for the drop. Clay, Nick, Karl, Ranboo and Tubbo voted for the coaster.

"George didn't vote!" Skeppy said.

"I'm not going on either, I'm gonna sit out of the next one. Plus, deathcoaster wins." George shrugged. Half the group cheered and the group of four all frowned.

"Calm down, we will do the drop after." Nick said to Tommy who was groaning.

"Surely come, George." Clay said. George shook his head, pointing to the bench nearby the roller coaster.

"I'll be over there." He said.

"I'll join you, then you aren't alone." Clay said as the group walked.

"No, I'm fine. I need to call someone anyways. You go, I'll watch." George said.

"You sure?"

"Yes, go." George laughed, pushing Clay closer to everyone else. Clay gave him a wave before lining up with the others.

George sat down on the bench and took a deep breath, pulling out his phone and bracing himself.

**L**

I told you not to go

You said you were grounded

What are you going to do if a villain shows up in the city

Or even worse, goes to the theme park to get you.

This is very irresponsible of you

George respond to me

George sighed and hit dial. Phil picked up instantly.

"George."

"Hey, Phil." George mumbled.

"Are you out of your mind?" Phil seethed.

"Ok, it's just one day out. I'm not even that far from the city. If a red alert goes out, I'll come back. Easy."

"What if a villain goes to you? You know you're on Blade's radar." Phil said.

"You're forgetting I am literally GNotFound. I'll just transform and boom. George Davidson is nowhere to be found and I'm here to save the day." George said softly, looking around and making sure no one was near.

"But if GNotFound shows up out of nowhere super quick, everyone is going to be confused as to why you were at the park already. Your identity could be found."

"Please stop stressing. I'm fine, I'll be fine." George said.

Phil sighed, and George could almost see his frustrated facial expression.

"You and Dream are infuriating at times." He said.

"Well, we are young and stupid. Maybe you should have picked better." George said, rolling his eyes.

"George!" He heard a yell, and looked to see all his friends on the roller coaster, waving at him. He chuckled and waved back. The massive group of nine took up the whole coaster. Clay was at the back without a partner but he was still smiling.

"Pussy!" Tommy screamed at George, followed by a loud "Language!" By Darryl.

"I apologise for my son." Phil said, apparently hearing Tommy's curse from the phone.

"He's fine. I just sat out of the ride to call you." George said.

"I'm sorry, George. I'm just worried for your safety and identity." Phil said.

"I know. I understand." George sighed, watching as the roller coaster began, and they started to yell in fear and delight.

"Blade doesn't strike me as the patient person." He said. The ride did a loop and he could hear Nick's scream from here. "So I doubt he will wait long before coming for you."

"Yeah, I agree but-"

He stopped talking when something zoomed above his head, and he looked up to see a figure in the sky covered from head to toe in black, flying of their own accord.

George's jaw dropped, and the villain's eyes locked onto the deathcoaster.

The villain dropped down and stood right in front of the coaster as it reached him, and using his super strength, made the whole thing stop just at the top, before a massive drop.

In the front two seats was Nick and Karl. Karl screamed when he was face with the villain. Nick's eyes were wide and he tried leaning back in the seat.

Everyone in the park nearby had begun to freak out now, people screaming and running, and George could see the ride operators panicking, pressing a number of buttons.

The villain grinned and put a now glowing hand onto the track in front of the coaster. The track began to melt, as the villain kept his hand there.

"No!" Nick yelled at the villain, as everyone else was yelling. George looked at Clay, who was

staring right at him, gesturing for him to turn around and leave.

"George! What's going on!" He heard Phil's voice.

"Fuck. You were right. There's a villain." George said, and then hung up the phone, deciding on which way to run to hide and transform.

"Where." The villain yelled, teeth bared. "Is George Davidson."

*Well shit.*

The track was still melting, creeping towards the wheels of Karl and Nick's row. If it melts, and the villain lets go, the whole coaster would slide off and fall.

If all of his friends staring at him wasn't enough of a hint for the villain, then what George did next was.

"I'm over here, you dickhead!" George yelled.

The villain snapped his neck to where George was yelling from, and immediately let go of the coaster, turning to fly at George.

The coaster didn't move, it stayed balanced at the top of the drop.

However, the track was still melting, even after the villain had let go. Much slower, but still melting.

"George! Run!" He heard Clay's voice above the rest, and run he did. He sprinted through the crowd, running through the park.

The villain landed in front of him, making him skid to a stop.

"I've got to keep you alive, unfortunately." They said, taking a step forward with a hand outstretched. George dodged and faked a left, before jumping right into an arcade.

He sprinted between games, hearing screams and things being thrown to the ground behind him. He kept running and weaving, before finding a door and running through, turning and locking it behind him.

He ran to the window of the small room and smashed it open with his foot, climbing out just as he heard the door break open.

He ran to the next attraction.  
Of course, the hall of mirrors.

He ran into mirrors and glass multiple times, but made his way deeper through the game. He heard smashing from behind, and saw the villain in a mirror behind him.

He spun around with a gasp, but the villain wasn't there, it was an illusion. He heard a smash to his right instead.

George thought he saw the villain again, but the illusions just continued.

*Fuck, this is confusing.*

"Get back here George. Blade wants a word with you." The villain taunted. It came from his left.

George ran deeper through the maze, his breathing quick and heart racing.

Finally, *finally* he made it to the end, and hid behind a curtain, pulling out his pendent.

He heard a constant smashing of glass, but ignored it.

"Mask on." He whispered, and transformed.

He still couldn't afford to be seen though, it would be too obvious. So he broke through a wall and left the attraction, finally seeing the light of day again.

He sprinted away, through the park. People saw him and the looks on their faces were mixed between relief and confusion.

He had to make his way back to the coaster. His friends were still in danger.

When he arrived, he saw ride operators attempting to help. They had climbed onto the platform beside the rail, and were getting the passengers off.

But the melting still hadn't stopped. It had melted the entire drop from the start of the coaster to the ground. He saw the wheels of the coaster slowly inching off.

The second thing George noticed, was how Darryl didn't have a seatbelt on currently. It seemed the ride operators had opened the seats up in order to pull the people off.

Standing near the coaster, but safely on the ground was Nick, Karl, Tommy and Quackity. Skeppy was being helped down the ladder, but the others were still in their seats. Darryl was in the process of standing up, taking the hand of a ride operator to pull him off the coaster.

But the coaster was slipping still. It was seconds away from the first compartment to slip off, and it wouldn't be long before the rest of it followed with the momentum.

George ran and leaped onto the coaster track, and started running along it, his speed making him be able to run up the big incline easily.

He was behind the coaster, but as he neared it, he saw it begin to move.

Darryl had been pulled off, and Ranboo was about to have his seatbelt removed, but the coaster suddenly lurched forward, and began to drop. Everyone on and off the coaster screamed.

George jumped and grabbed a handle at the back of the coaster, and used his feet to dig into the track. He used as much strength as he could to stop it from moving.

There were dozens of screams and gasps, but George had done it. Almost the entire coaster was in the air, swinging slightly. But it wasn't falling. He adjusted so he had one hand on the track instead of his ankles, and one on the coaster.

He had his jaw clenched in concentration, but he turned to look at the platform where the ride operators were, right beside him but slightly lower.

"Get them off, I can't hold for long." He said through gritted teeth.

He looked down at the small group left, all swinging in the coaster that was only being held up by George. Just Ranboo, Tubbo and Clay left.

They got Ranboo off the coaster next. A very difficult process now that all of them were

completely vertical. They had multiple people holding him in place while someone remotely from the ground disconnected his seatbelt, and then pulled him up and onto the platform.

"GNotFound." He heard a voice, and he looked back down. Clay was sitting right there, hands white from their grip on his chest seatbelt. He had to rotate his neck back and up to look at the superhero.

"It's ok, Clay, you'll be off in a second." George said through clenched teeth, adjusting his grip that was slipping.

"Where's George?" Clay asked.

"He's ok. Hiding. The villain is looking for him." George assured him, as everyone got Tubbo off onto the platform.

It was just Clay left.

"You're almost off, Clay." He heard Nick yell in support from the ground.

A ride operator also said his name, and Clay turned to look at them. George had to stretch a bit more, to lower the coaster so Clay was closer to the platform. Three people reached out of hold Clay in place, as they waited for the seatbelt to be disconnected.

George noticed that the melting of the track was still going, and it was slowly reaching where he was holding on.

"Hurry up. The track is going to melt where I'm holding it." He ordered. He looked at Clay and saw someone shaking the seatbelt.

"They are having trouble getting the seatbelt off from the control panel. It's jammed." A ride operator said.

"Fuck." George muttered, taking a deep breath to calm down. "Is there a manual way to take it off?" George asked.

"Yes, but it's behind the coaster. A pedal we can't reach." One of them said. George looked and could see a pedal just beneath where he was holding on.

"I see it." George said, figuring out if he could kick it with his feet, but when he tried, he couldn't quite reach it.

He could feel the metal beneath his other hand on the track begin to disintegrate.

"Shit. Ok. Everyone let go and step back." George said. They listened, and let go of Clay, who was still held in place by the seatbelt, but looked a lot more nervous now. He looked back up at George, swallowing.

"I've got you, Clay." George said, Clay nodded, and braced himself.

George took a deep breath, let go of the track above him, kicking his foot out which just reached the pedal now, a loud clicking sound indicating Clay's seatbelt had come undone. George swung his free hand down and grabbed the back of Clay's shirt, tugging him up and out of the coaster as they fell.

There were several screams, including a gasp from Clay. But George wasn't worried. He was

holding Clay now. Everything was fine.

George pulled Clay closer to his body, and yelled "Shield!" The familiar blue sphere surrounded the two of them, and they fell in sync with the coaster.

They landed, the shield absorbing the impact, but the both of them were firmly and safely on the ground. Clay was holding onto George extremely tightly, his knuckles white and eyes wide. George let out a sigh of relief when he saw Clay was ok, and patted him on the shoulder.

"You ok, Clay?" George asked. Clay hugged him, a thank you.

"Yeah." He croaked, and George helped him stand up.

"GNotFound!" A voice interrupted, and George turned to see the melting villain flying above them through the blue haze. "Where is he? Where did you hide him?"

George looked and saw the rest of his friends jogging over to him and Clay.

"The fuck are they doing?" George muttered, then turned to Clay. "Get you and your friends to hide, got it?" He said.

"Where's George?" Clay asked

"He's safe."

"Where?"

"Not important. Just go." George said, dropping his shield, and practically shoving Clay towards his friends. Nick pulled the dirty blonde into a hug before the group backed away from the coaster and the villain.

"Who?" George asked the villain, who scoffed.

"Where did you hide George Davidson?" He yelled.

"Why the hell does he want George?" He distantly heard Tommy say.

George turned and ran, his goal to get the villain away from everyone else. He needed a safer spot to get his jewel. But he didn't have much time and Dream was nowhere to be found.

"Coward!" The villain called, chasing after George. "Where is he!"

"I haven't even seen this kid you're talking about. Whatever personal vendetta you have against him, you can leave it alone. Fight me." George said, turning around with a grin now he was in an open area. He snapped his bow.

"It's not a personal vendetta. Blade's orders. You wouldn't want to piss him off more, would you?" The villain taunted, flying around above George.

"Quit flying and fight me hand to hand. Or are you too much of a pussy." George spat. The villain glared at him, and dropped lower.

"I'll ask one more time. Where is George Davidson."

"And I'll say this once more. I don't know who you're talking about!" He said, lining up a shot and shooting. The villain dodged, and then charged at George, hands glowing.



George ducked and threw himself to the side, rolling onto one knee and lining up a second shot, which just narrowly missed.

"You can't fight me alone. Tell me where George is or I'll melt you and take the jewel from your remains." The villain said.

"You'll have to actually get close to me if you want to do that." George laughed. The villain charged again, but George dodged once more, and when he spun around, he landed a shot in their calf, making the villain drop to the floor.

George sprinted forward and jumped on him, pinning the villain onto his stomach. The villain's hands were glowing, and desperately trying to touch George, but he was careful.

"Tell Blade something for me. I know you can send him messages." George said, leaning into his ear. The villain twisted, still trying to fight. "Tell him no matter what he fucking tries, me and Dream will always win. He can drag innocent civilians into this war all he likes. But Dream and I will be here to protect them. We may be young and stupid, but we are super fucking stubborn with massive moral compasses. And we have never lost a battle." George said, and reached to his neck, and yanked off the pendent.

The hands stopped glowing and the villain stopped fighting, their clothes transforming back into regular civilian clothes. It was a random man, maybe middle aged.

George got off him and pocketed the jewel, sighing as his own pendent buzzed twice. He had five minutes.

"GNotFound!" He heard his name being called, and turned to see Clay running, his friends not far behind. "Please tell me where the hell George is." He begged.

"I'll go get him now." George sighed in exhaustion, shaking out his arms and turning to walk away.

"Wait!" Clay stopped him, getting in front of him. He then jumped forward and hugged him again. "Thank you. For saving us."

"Of course. Is everyone ok?" George asked, letting go of the hug and turning to look at everyone. They all were looking at him in admiration, confusion and awe.

"Holy fucking shit. It's actually GNotFound." Tommy said.

"Did you just realise?" Ranboo asked with a scoff.

"Fucking hell man, you're so cool, Big G." Tommy said, ignoring Ranboo and slapping George on the shoulder.

"GNotFound, I'm a big fan." Nick said, holding out a hand for a handshake, which George accepted, knowing how much this will mean to Nick.

"Where is George?" Darryl asked.

"He's safe. I hid him, but I'll go get him now and check on him." George said, exhaustion clearly showing.

"Why was the villain after him?" Quackity asked.

"How were you already here? At the amusement park?" Clay added.

"Ok. So, I'm not going to explain everything, since if too many people know it can cause a bit of chaos. But George is being targeted by the villains. There was a bit of a mixup where the Blade, who is sending the villains, thinks for some reason that George knows Dream's identity. He doesn't though. I'm here because I've been protecting George. I had my suspicions that there would be an attack today, so I followed him here." George explained.

Everyone looked like they were in shock apart from Clay, who looked more curious.

"The Blade... he's alive?" Skeppy said. George keeps forgetting that's not public knowledge.

"And he's after George? Our George?" Nick said.

"It's ok, Dream and I are going to sort it out. George is fine, no need to stress. I'm going to go get him now." George said, just as his pendent started rapidly flashing and buzzing.

"What's going on?" The man on the ground said. George looked at him. He had his face scrunched in pain, a wound still in his calf.

"Can you guys get a worker to come help? Call the police and ambulance and stuff, I need to go." George said to the group. They nodded.

"Thanks again, for saving us by the way." Tubbo chimed in, and everyone agreed.

"You're welcome." George simply said, before swallowing his awkwardness and turning to jog away.

"Bye GNotFound." One more person called out. George glanced back to see Clay waving at him. He smiled and waved back.

"Bye Clay."

He left the amusement park entirely, since it was too hard to find somewhere to transform back without people finding out.

He detransformed in a clump of trees nearby, before slowly making his way back to the parking lot.

He sighed as he reached Darryl's car, and sat down on the hood of it, pulling out his phone and seeing too many messages to count.

"George." He heard a monotone voice, and his head snapped up.

Techno was standing nearby, hands in his pockets and a blank look on his face.

"Oh. Hi. Techno." George said nervously. Techno looked him up and down.

"What are you doing out here." He said.

"Um. There... was a sort of villain attack."

"I heard. And saw." Techno said, gesturing to the crowds of people all still freaking out. "Is Tommy ok?"

"Yeah. They are all good. I lost them though." George said.

Techno hummed.

"Yes. You did."

They stared at each other for another minute. A whole minute of George feeling awkward and nervous for no apparent reason.

"George!" He heard several yells, and looked up to see all nine of his friends sprinting towards him. Nick was first, and pulled him off the hood of the car to hug him.

"Fuck. Are you guys all ok? I couldn't leave my hiding spot, but I last saw you all on the coaster." George said, wriggling out of the hug and looking at each of their faces.

"GNotFound saved us. I can't believe an entire villain was after you, George. And I shook GNotFound's hand!" Nick said, unable to contain his excitement.

Clay was next, pushing past Nick and pulling George into a gentle, but tight hug, wrapping his arms around his shoulders and pressing George's head against his chest. Clay closed his eyes and took a deep breath as George slowly hugged him back.

"You scared me." Clay mumbled.

"You scared *me*." George said, also muffled by Clay's shirt.

"I knew I shouldn't have gone on the coaster without you." He said.

"Techno! Did you hear? I almost died! It was fucking awesome!" Tommy said.

"But you survived." Techno said, voice still monotone.

"I did. But I almost didn't! And I met GNotFound. God, he's awesome. I can't wait to tell Wilbur. And Phil!" Tommy said.

Phil.

George pulled away from Clay and looked at his phone again. A billion messages from Clay, Nick and everyone else. And also a ton from Phil.

And his sister.

George checked the ones from his sister first.

**Lexi**

george, don't tell me ur at the amusement park with the villain

shit

it's on the news

r u ok?

where r u?

please answer.

gnotfound saved your friends

where the hell r u

i'm scared, please answer

if you don't, i'm calling mom, i don't care if you'll get in trouble.

"Shit." George, said, immediately clicking on his sister's number and called her. She picked up instantly. "Lexi, I'm ok. Everyone's fine. Did you call mom?"

"Thank god. I was about to. God, you scared me." She said with a shaky voice. George slowly blinked in relief.

"I'm fine. I'm coming home now. I wasn't in the news at all, was I?" George asked.

"No, just your friends and the roller coaster incident. There was no sound, just video of GNotFound getting everyone off and saving Clay Block." She said.

"Ok. Ok. I'll be back in twenty minutes." He said, looking at his friends and gesturing to the car.

"See you then." She said, and George hung up.

After saying goodbye to the sophomores and Techno, who would not take his eyes off George, they all started driving back home.

George was staring at his phone, reading Phil's messages. Clay was also reading his own phone and typing.

Phil tried to call him, and George hesitated, but answered, turning the volume down so no one could hear the man's voice.

"George. I saw the news. Are you ok? Is Tommy?" Phil said.

"Hey, Xavier. Yeah I'm all good." George said, clearing his throat. He noticed Clay look up at him.

"People are around you right now?"

"Mhm." George said, picking at his nails absentmindedly.

"You transformed in time? Didn't make it obvious it's you?"

"Yep, all good."

"Got everyone of the coaster."

"Yes, everyone else is ok. We are going home now. Thanks for checking." George said.

"What did I tell you, George."

"I know, I know. It was a stupid idea to sneak out because I could get in trouble." George said, sensing that the whole car was now listening to his phone call.

"Things could have been so much worse. You could have gotten caught. Or someone could have gotten seriously hurt. Or the villain could have figured out you are GNotFound because you transformed the same time George disappeared." Phil said.

"Trust me, I know. I'm not sneaking out again. You don't need to worry. I'll stay locked in my

room." George said bitterly.

"I'm looking out for you."

"Sure. I'll see you on Monday, Xavier." George said.

"Bye George."

"Bye." And George hung up. Almost everyone in the car was looking at him. George saw Darryl's eyebrows wiggle in the rear view mirror.

"I thought part of the deal of me coming was no more teasing about Xavier." George said. They all begrudgingly turned around, except Clay.

Clay grabbed George's hand, and threaded their fingers together.

"I'm glad you're ok." He said softly. George smiled, but looked away to hide his blush.

"And you." He replied.

"I'm not letting you leave my sight now." Clay said. George suppressed a groan.

"I can take care of myself. I don't need protecting."

"Fine. Then maybe I just want you to protect me." Clay sent a grin.

Clay's phone started ringing too. And George saw the caller ID.

*Father.*

## Chapter End Notes

I hope everyone had a good christmas :)

Last chapter I'll post in 2021 I guess

# See you tomorrow, Blade

## Chapter Summary

George receives a letter for the college he applied for, but refuses to open it. And a new video message from the Blade gives a warning to the two superheroes.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Nick's step-mom was telling me that he wasn't as much scared as he was excited about the whole thing. Apparently it was the highlight of his week." Lorna said as they drove to school.

"How could he think that was exciting? He literally almost died." Lexi said. George looked out of the window.

"I know. I can't get over how relieved I am that George wasn't at the theme park. You getting grounded was the best scenario." Lorna said, glancing over at him. He heard Lexi cough from the backseat.

"Yeah. Lucky." He simply said.

"Alright. Well, have a good day at school, you two. Dad will be home late, they've moved him to on-call reporters now, so his hours are a bit longer." Lorna said as they pulled up at the school.

"Bye Mom." Lexi said, jumping out of the car. George was also about to get out, but his Mom stopped him.

"I wanted to give this to you after school, but I'm too excited." She said, reaching for her purse and ruffling around in it. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"What?"

"It came in the mail this morning." She said with a wide smile on her face, as she pulled out an envelope. George took it and his eyes went wide when he saw the logo.

Stanford University.

He wanted to do a computer science program there after high school. He applied ages ago, at the start of senior year. Before he realised how busy his life was.

"I don't want to open it." George said. Lorna shook her head with a smile.

"I know it's nerve-wracking, but this is part of life. Whatever it says in that letter, it doesn't matter." Lorna said.

"What if it says I didn't get in." George said. Lorna put her hand over his.

"Then you didn't get in. There's lot of opportunities."

"What if it says I *did* get in." He asked even softer.

"If you want more time to prepare yourself, you can open it later." She said. George nodded.

"I can't do it now." He said, eyeing the logo. Lorna nodded and kissed him on the head.

"Whatever it says, I'm proud of you, always ok? Now go to school, you have an appointment with Puffy." She said, taking the letter from his hands. He quickly took it back.

"Can I hold onto it?" He asked. She nodded. "Bye Mom." He said, as he stepped out of the car.

"Bye honey." She said, before driving away.

George took a deep breath and turned around, still looking at the letter in his hands.

"What's up, Gogy?" Nick said, barrelling into George and almost making him drop the letter completely. He wrapped an arm around George's neck and started pulling him towards the school entrance.

"Not much." George replied with a sigh, letting Nick pull him along.

"I actually meant to call you last night, but figured that I would rather talk in person. I was wondering if we could talk..." Nick said kind of nervously. George looked at him, resting his eyes from the letter in his hands.

"What's that?" Nick asked, and grabbed the letter. "Stanford! What does it say?" He said excitedly, smiling at George. George yanked it back and put it in his bag.

"I haven't opened it yet." He muttered.

"What? Do it now-" The bell rang and George took his opportunity to dart away from Nick, towards reception for his appointment.

When he got there though, he saw Puffy deep in thought at the desk in the corner of the room. She had multiple printed pages out on the table, a pen in her hand which was tapping against the table, and her iPad open with multiple documents.

"Hello." George said nervously. He was nervous every time he came here.

Puffy spun around and smiled at him, gesturing for him to come in and closed the door.

"How are you George?" She asked, turning back around, gathering all the sheets of paper and putting them in a drawer, before grabbing the iPad and opening a new document.

George sat down in the beanbag and dumped his bag to the side. It felt heavier than usual, as soon as he put that darn letter in it. It's like it had a massive weight attached to it.

"I'm ok. Except I'm grounded. And there's villains after me. And I got a letter from the university I applied to. And I fell asleep while driving yesterday and almost killed me and my sister." He said.

Puffy sat down across from him, watching him carefully.

"It doesn't sound like it has been the easiest week for you." She said, writing with her pen. George sighed.

"You can say that again." He muttered.

"Start with the driving. You fell asleep?"

"Yeah. I had to drive my sister to some swimming thing. And I almost fell asleep. She screamed when we swerved. The entire ride back I had my eyes peeled wide open." He said.

"Have you taken your medication?" She asked.

George hesitated.

"I took it once last week. Accidentally. I haven't since." He said.

"You don't need me to explain how lack of sleep can affect you, I'm sure you already know." She said. George nodded. "Maybe avoid driving for a while. Even if you do take the medication, it can still mess with you." She said.

"Yeah, I know." George said. "I don't drive much anyways."

"Ok. Well, I saw in the news about the whole amusement park incident, and I think I recognised some of your friends." She said, eyeing him carefully. George was silent for a moment. "You were there, weren't you." She said.

"Please don't tell my parents. They were so relieved I wasn't, but yeah. I was."

"You said there was villains after you..." She trailed off.

"The villain there was after me, and my friends got hurt because of it." He said. Puffy was watching him carefully, making small notes.

"So what happened?"

"I ran away... GNotFound got me to hide. And when it ended, yeah. Everyone was fine." He said simply.

"Right... why was the villain after you?" She asked.

"So, the Blade, who is sending out all the villains, thinks I know Dream's real identity." George said. Puffy narrowed her eyes slightly. "I don't. Dream saved me and knew my name and he thought maybe we knew each other. It's complicated." He said.

"But you and Dream... are you friends?"

"It's hard to explain. We've had a few conversations. On my roof. And he helped me. And saved me. But we aren't that close. He's a superhero." George said.

Puffy was quiet, looking at him. He noticed her glance back at her desk where all of her papers were.

"He isn't one of the boys who asked you out... is he? Or the one you like?" She said, looking back at him.

George faltered.

"No. Of course not. We've had like only a few conversations. He's a superhero, I don't even know who he is. You can't like someone you don't know the name of." He said. Puffy hummed with narrowed eyes.

"How is everything with each of those boys?" She then asked. George cringed as he thought about it.



"Um. Ok, so the guy I like definitely still only sees me as a friend. Someone tried to expose me by telling him I like him and trying to turn him gay, but he knew they were lying. But he asked me if I did like him like that. I denied it and he laughed, basically saying he would know if I liked him anyways." George sighed.

"Well he must be a bit oblivious." Puffy smiled. George nodded.

"The boy who asked me out and was really nice about it is still the same. My friends think we are thing, because we hang out and he hugs me. I... I still don't like him like that." He said.

Puffy nodded encouragingly, and George took a deep breath.

"And the last guy... well, it's weird. I might have messed up." George sighed.

"The one who was upset when you rejected him and said you liked someone else." Puffy confirmed. George nodded.

"Everything was going great, but then he almost kissed me. Sort of. It felt like the moment was leading to that. But he didn't. The thing was... I almost let him." George said, rubbing his face. "I think I was just swept up in the moment. I don't love him, I like someone else."

"This is the guy that you don't know much about and he doesn't really know you?" She asked. George nodded. "And he likes you but you don't like him at all..?" She said.

"No. Well. No. I mean... how could I possibly like him? I know hardly anything about him and that's not how loving someone works. I could never love him. Because I can never get to know him. I was just caught in a fragile moment. That's all. I wouldn't have actually let him kiss me." George said, a determined look on his face, whereas Puffy looked slightly doubtful, but she nodded.

"Sometimes you can be swept in moments. But it's not like it's impossible to like someone you don't know the fine details of. If you trust them and enjoy being around them, then that can be enough to feel something for them. I don't think it's crazy he likes you. And I don't think it's impossible for you to like him either." Puffy said carefully. George shook his head.

"I like someone else. Besides, me and him could never work." He said.

"But you admit that you *could* have feelings for him?" She asked.

"I never said that!" George said with wide eyes.

"You said the reasons why you *shouldn't* like him. You didn't say why you *don't* like him. Those are two different things."

"I don't like him! I can't... I-I just don't! We are different." George said, heart racing for no reason. He didn't like Dream. He never has. He never will. His racing heart was just nervous.

"Different how?"

"I'm all... cautious and an overthinker and a planner and an obnoxious know-it-all. He's a risk-taker, and is cocky, and careless and stress-free."

"I doubt anyone is stress free." Puffy said with a raised eyebrow. "And just because you are different doesn't mean you can't work. Opposites attract. It would boring and aggravating to date someone exactly like you."

"But we are too different." George whispered, then shook his head. "I don't like him. I don't know him. I like someone else."

"Describe the boy you *do* like to me." Puffy said, leaning back in her chair.

"Huh." George stared at her. She shrugged.

"Describe him."

"Uh. He's... he's sweet, and caring. And he's creative and funny. He's confident, too. Unless it's to do with his father." He added at the end. Puffy nodded.

"So you think you and him have more in common?" She asked. George blinked.

"I mean... I'm not very confident around people I don't know." Unless he was GNotFound. "And I'm definitely not creative, and I would not at all say I'm funny. At least, not in the witty way he is. And I guess I'm not really sweet. I'm quite sour actually, I'm surprised I even have close friends-"

"George." Puffy interrupted him with furrowed eyebrows. "I was trying to get you to see that you can like someone who is different to you but you just went on to insult yourself. You are very witty, and you've always been sweet to me. And you're creative as hell, with the excuses you pull out of your ass." She chuckled slightly.

George felt his neck flushing from the overwhelming compliments and the dig at his lies.

"My point *was*." She continued. "That sometimes you can't control who you like. And just because you think you *shouldn't* like someone, doesn't mean you can't. And don't be so quick to talk negatively about yourself." She said.

"Thanks." He mumbled, avoiding eye contact. "But it doesn't matter anyways, because I know I don't like the guy who likes me. And the boy I like only sees me as a friend."

"Why do you think he only sees you as a friend?" She asked.

"Because he always says we are friends. And he doesn't flirt like the guy who *actually* likes me does. And he's never said he likes boys. And of course, he's obsessed with this girl. There's just no hope for me and him."

"You don't know that." Puffy said gently.

"Everything is just a mess. And on top of that." He put his head in his hands as he looked at his bag, the knowing of his letter in there weighing him down. "I could be moving to California."

"Have you opened your letter?" She asked, following his eyesight.

"Couldn't bring myself to. Whatever it says, both options are bad."

"How come?"

"I can't move away. I have commitments here. But I don't want to be rejected, I want to pursue my career and move away. But I can't." George said.

Puffy leaned forward slightly.

"What commitments, George? What's holding you back from your life? Your future?" She said softly. George looked at her.

And for a second.  
An entire second.  
He considered telling her.

It would be a weight off his chest, someone he could talk to it about, give him advice. And she couldn't tell anyone.

"Family." He lied. And he knows Puffy knows it's a lie too. But nonetheless, she leaned back, nodding, and wrote a quick note.

He was so close.

•

"Why is he so quiet." A voice finally made George look up. It was lunch, and everyone was sitting and eating at their table. Clay had joined, the first thing he said to George was that he was going to walk him home, and he apologised profusely for not walking him to school. His father wouldn't let him go early. George told him that he didn't need him to.

Not much could convince Clay. The boy seemed almost angry at the fact he couldn't walk George to school in the morning.

Clay wasn't talking much though during the entire break. George noticed a new bruise on Clay's other cheek, but when he pointed it out, Clay just dismissed it.

"Well, everyone interrogated him about the villain so I think he is probably sick of you all." Darryl said, one of the few who didn't pester George with constant questions.

"Nah, he has a letter from the college he applied to and hasn't opened it yet because he's scared." Nick said with a chuckle.

George turned and glared at him, still resting his chin on his hands. But everyone turned to George with excited looks in their eyes.

"What college?" Clay asked immediately.

"Stanford university." Nick said on George's behalf. George covered his face.

"Woah. George, you have to open it. You must have got in." Quackity said. George didn't respond.

"It's alright, George. I'm sure you did get in. But if you didn't, that's ok too." Clay said reassuringly, putting a hand on George's shoulder, who tensed at the contact.

"Open it now!" Tubbo said, bouncing in his seat like it was his own letter.

"He doesn't have to." Darryl said.

"Yes he does. The longer he waits, the more anxious he will be." Skeppy said, reaching to George's bag. George reacted and tugged the bag away from the boy, glaring at him.

"How big is the letter? The bigger the better, right?" Ranboo asked. George swallowed and pulled it out. Tommy scoffed.

"That's minuscule! Yeah, sorry Gogs. You didn't get in." He said. Tubbo punched him in the shoulder.

"You have to open it. Come on, George." Nick said. George couldn't win.

Whatever the letter said, he wouldn't like it.

"Do you want someone else to open it for you?" Clay said. George looked at him, and then nodded, slightly relieved, and passed the letter to him. Clay smiled and took it.

"Open. Open. Open." The table started to chant. George covered his face.

He heard the tear of the envelop, and held his breath.

"What does it say?" He heard someone ask, but the heartbeat in his ears was drowning out most the noise, tuned in to whatever Clay would say next.

"You got in." Clay said, and George could hear the smile on his face.

The table erupted with cheers and banging and he felt a few slaps on his back. Everyone was excited for him, relieved. They were all proud of him, and supportive.

But George was the opposite.

"It's amazing George!" He heard Clay say. George still didn't take his hands off his face. *It doesn't feel very amazing.*

George stood up, dropping his hands, and everyone looked at him with grins that slowly turned to frowns. George wasn't looking at any of them.

"I'm not going to Stanford." He said, and then picked up his bag and walked away, wiping his nose as he felt the tears that had pooled in his eyes begin to teeter at the edge of his eyelids.

He couldn't go. California was so far away. This city needed him.

GNotFound can't leave, the city would go to ruins.  
George Davidson is stuck.

When he left the cafeteria, he blindly ran through the school halls, vision blurry and blood pumping in his ears. He needed to sit down.

He pushed open the first door he could find and closed it behind him, falling to the ground against the wall beside the door. It was an empty classroom. He threw his bag beside him and put his hands on either side of his head, pulling at his hair as he focused on his breathing.

*Just breathe. Just breathe. You've done it your whole life, just fucking breathe in and out.*

Why was it so difficult?

He could hear everything. The clock in the room right above his head was drilling into his brain. The sounds of voices and footsteps from the hallway were echoing along the ground.

The door opened beside him, but he didn't look up. It opened up against him, hiding him from view from the person who had entered.

"George?" He heard his name being called. He could only sob in response. "George." Their voice became soft, and closer. Right in front of his face, as the door clicked shut again and they were left in the quiet yet somehow deafening room.

"It's me. It's Clay." The soft voice said. George didn't open his eyes, kept his hands pressed against the sides of his head, and breathing too fast.

"It's ok." He said again. George only nodded, blinking more tears down his face. *It's not ok.*

There was a fleeting, soft touch on his cheek, that disappeared as soon as it came to wipe his tears.

"Can you hear my breathing?" Clay said. George focused, hearing very deep and purposeful breaths. He shakily tried to hold his own breath in for longer to time it with Clay's, and then released it quickly at the same time he breathed out.

As he copied the breathing, he could feel a new sensation against his knees. A circular motion on each one, soothingly moving around at the same pace as the breathing.

Once George had calmed down, he removed his hands from where he was pulling tightly on his hair, and rested them by his sides.

He waited another moment before opening his eyes. He knows they were probably red and glistening, along with his cheeks and nose as he looked at the dirty blonde.

Clay smiled, still rubbing circles onto both of George's propped up knees.

"Feel better?" He asked. George nodded, wiping his face and sniffing. *How embarrassing. I need to stop crying in front of him.*

"Now. Do you want to tell me what's wrong?" Clay said, stopping the motion and sitting cross-legged in front of George, who's legs were still acting as a defense, propped up between them.

"I'm alright now. Thank you." George mumbled.

"Yeah, but why were you not ok? Wasn't the letter good news?" Clay asked. George closed his eyes for another moment, before opening them again and meeting the green eyes across from him.

"I can't go."

"Why not?" Clay asked gently.

"I... I live here. This is my city and my home and my family and friends. My memories, my childhood, my commitments. Everything is here. It would be selfish to leave." George said. Clay reached forward and grabbed both of George's hands.

"It would be selfish of you to stay." Clay said. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"Wh-what?"

"Stanford needs you. The whole country does. George Davidson is being wasted on this garbage city." Clay said with a smile.

"I can't go." George said again.

"George." Clay squeezed his hands. "It's your life. It's your future. You can't spend your life trying to please others. You deserve to go to Stanford."

"You don't understand, I can't go. It's not that I'm scared or that I hate change. It's that I literally cannot leave. There is so much I have to do--"

"Your future is important too." Clay interrupted.

"No it's not." George said, shaking his head. "There are more important things."

Clay also shook his head with a smile, and pulled George's hands to his face, pressing a kiss onto the back of his knuckles. If George's face wasn't already red, it would have most certainly blushed.

"The world deserves someone like you. And you deserve the world." Clay mumbled against his hands, eyes staring into George's with sincerity.

"I wish you could understand." George whispered. Clay smiled again.

"I understand, trust me, I do. But I wish you could understand too. That you are just as important as everyone else."

"I'm just George."

"Yeah. You're *George*." Clay laughed. "No one else can be George Davidson."

"George Davidson isn't important. There doesn't need to be a George Davidson." George said. Clay leaned forward, eyes searching George's.

"You're important to me. *I* need George Davidson."

There was a loud ding and both boys immediately pulled out their phones.

## **ALERT**

**Dream and GNotFound requested by mayor**

George's grip tightened on the phone.

"I wonder what that's about." Clay said, pocketing the phone while fumbling slightly. George hummed, trying to think of an excuse.

"What do you have now?" Clay asked.

"Comp science." George said, a breath of relief when he realised he could leave easily.

"Want me to walk you there?" Clay asked. George laughed and shook his head.

"You don't have to walk me everywhere. I know where I'm going."

"I know. But I want to."

"You can just say it's to protect me. But there's not much you can actually do against a villain." George said. Clay grinned and stood up, offering a hand to George.

"Maybe I just like being around you."

•

George sat on the swing of the park. All the kids were at school so he was pretty much alone.

Finally, Dream arrived and George stood up, about to tell him how relieved he was to see him. He did not want to face the Mayor alone.

"G, I'm so sorry I didn't help at the amusement park." Dream said before George could get a word in. George paused.

"Oh. It's fine, I mean, it was a bit far from the city." George said.

"You saved George. Thank you." Dream then said, with sincerity. George nodded as they walked side by side.

"Of course."

"What were you doing there?" He then asked.

"I had my suspicions George was going to be attacked, so I was stalking him all day. He hadn't left his house so I thought it would be easy but then he went to the park, so I went too." George said the lie he had prepared.

"Why would you do all that?" Dream asked. George looked at him.

"Because I didn't want him to get hurt." George said, pausing for a moment. "And I know how much he means to you..." He said, trailing off because he wasn't sure if it was even true.

"He does mean a lot. Thank you. I should have been keeping a closer eye on him. How long until you think he will be attacked again?" Dream asked.

"I have no idea. But something tells me that whatever the mayor called us for has something to do with the Blade. We told him not to call for us again, unless it was really important." George said.

And he was right.

When they entered the office, the projector was already set up, with the Blade's face on the screen. The Mayor watched as the two heroes entered, a blank look on his face.

"Let's just get this over with." The Mayor said. George and Dream both sat down and Mayor Block hit play.

"Dream and GNotFound, do you think this is some kind of game? You got lucky on Saturday. I almost had the boy." Blade began, and George winced at the volume.

"This could all be avoided if you just give me your jewels. No one has to get hurt. Dream's little pet can be safe. And everyone is happy." The Mayor said.

George saw Dream's hand ball into a fist at the taunt at George.

"The next time you see me, I'll finally get to meet him. And maybe I'll get to meet you in person too, GNotFound. And formally introduce myself. Us four can have a little chat. How does that sound?" Blade said. George tensed. It wasn't really possible for the four people to meet at once.

"This is your last warning. Before anyone has to get hurt. Before Dream's little friend gets dragged into it." The Blade said, a wide grin.

"I'll see you Tuesday."

The video switched off, and the projector folded away. The Mayor turned to face the teens, fingers

pressed together as he looked at them.

"What the hell is he talking about?" The Mayor said.

"The Blade thinks there's a boy who knows Dream's identity. He doesn't, but the Blade thinks he can use him to get our jewels." George said. The Mayor turned to Dream.

"Are you an idiot."

"I guess so." Dream murmured.

"This is your mess. You better clean it up. Who is the boy?"

George looked at Dream, unsure if they should tell him. The Mayor knows who George is, a friend of his son. It could get messier.

"It's not important." George said.

"I order you to tell me." The Mayor growled.

"You can't tell us what to do." George retorted, staring into the man's eyes.

"You are the one that brought an innocent civilian into this. You don't get to waltz out of here scot-free. I'm being perfectly reasonable. You have put the life of one of my civilians in danger, I have a right to know, and a right to be angry." The Mayor said, standing up and pointing at Dream.

The worst part was, he was sort of right.

"If anyone gets hurt. Or there are any fatalities. It's all on you, Dream." The Mayor spat. Dream stared at him, slowly shrinking into his seat.

"It's on the both of us." George said, sitting up straight. "I'm guessing you still want us to just give up our jewels."

"Well, I'm surprised you haven't. A kid's life is in danger and you still want to keep your jewellery and play superheroes? Selfish. The both of you." The Mayor scoffed.

"Selfish? Giving up is selfish. Who would still be here to save everyone? Look at the theme park! I saved all those teenagers." George said.

"My son nearly died." The Mayor stared intently at George.

"I *saved* Clay."

"He was the last one off that damn coaster. The Mayor's son, the one who got dropped. You are horribly selfish, GNotFound. Leaving him for last." The Mayor said with a tense jaw.

"Just because he happened to be the last one off, doesn't mean I wasn't trying as hard. I was holding that coaster while they got off. I saved Clay by using my shield. I saved your son, I thought you would be grateful." George scoffed, crossing his arms over his chest.

"He should have been priority. He should have been first off that-"

"Why should your son be first?" Dream interrupted. George and the Mayor looked at him. "His life isn't more important than anyone else's on that coaster." He said.



"How dare you!" The Mayor shouted at him. "He is my son. The Mayor's son!"

"Ok? GNotFound saved him and everyone else on that coaster. Order shouldn't matter. Every life is important, not just that guy who you only value as important because he is part of your reputation."

"Dream." George warned him.

"In fact, if we are going off who's life is more important, then I think Clay Block deserved to be last off." Dream shrugged.

The Mayor stood up and George's jaw dropped.

"How fucking dare you-"

"Dream!" George yelled too. "That's too far." He said, anger clear in his voice. Dream's small grin fell. "We are leaving." He said, grabbing Dream's arm and pulling him to his feet.

"You're both obnoxious pieces of shit." The Mayor said. George didn't respond, just dragged Dream out of the room.

The boy in blue was fuming as they walked out.

"G-"

"Shut it."

"I'm sorry."

"What the hell is wrong with you, Dream?" George spun around, poking him in the chest with his index finger. *"His life is the least important."* What the fuck?"

"I... I was just trying to get on the Mayor's nerves." Clay said, a slight lie.

"Have you even met Clay?" George asked. Clay faltered, choosing his next words carefully.

"I... yes, I think I have once or twice."

"You do not have the right to bring him into an argument like that. Clay has done nothing wrong. His life is just as important as everyone else." George said.

Clay was lost for words.

"I know the Mayor was being hypocritical. But you were too! You can't say every life is important and then the next second drag his innocent son into the argument to prove a point!" George said.

"I know. I'm sorry." Clay whispered.

"Clay is too nice of a person to be used in an argument like that. I've already had to remove him from two arguments myself. Don't drag him back into it." George said.

Clay was in shock. He had no clue G cared that much about him, just some random kid, the son of the man who verbally abused them on the daily.

"I won't. I promise." Clay said.

George nodded and continued walking, gesturing for Dream to follow him.

"We need to tell L. About the video." He said, changing the conversation.

"Yeah. Blade said Tuesday. That's tomorrow. He's going to attack George again tomorrow." Dream said, clicking and unclicking his sword. George hummed, processing the fact that he's the one who is going to be targeted.

"I don't know why Blade told us that. Now we have time to prepare." George said.

"We could get George to hide out at L's for the day." Dream said. George cringed and looked at his partner.

He had an exam tomorrow.

And in retrospect, one measly math exam was not important at all.

"You want to make him hide for an entire day? First of all, if the Blade finds him there, we've lead him straight to L and the jewels. Second, even if we hide George for the day, the Blade will just try again the next day, and the next. How long can we hide George?"

"Forever." Dream said.

"Be realistic, Dream." George said. "The safest bet is for the both of us to be near him for the day." George said.

"What? Can't he just take one day off?" Clay asked.

George swallowed. He wanted to. He would have. But he had that exam. What excuse could he possibly pull out of his ass to miss an entire exam.

"This will be good practice for every day. Hiding George for one day won't do anything, the Blade will just get him again. And we cannot hide him forever. So we just stay close, and ready." George said.

Dream looked tense, with hesitant eyes. But he eventually sighed.

"Oh. Yeah, I can do that." Dream said. The only reason he agreed was because he wasn't going to let George out of his sight anyways.

"Ok. But don't be too close to him. The Blade is expecting us to be protecting him, so he will be keeping an eye out for that kind of thing." George said.

"Shouldn't we tell L, too?" Dream said.

"I'll shoot them a text. And if Blade does get George... don't... don't trade anything." George said. Dream look at him with a confused look in his eyes. "Don't give up your jewel to save him."

"What the hell do you mean? If he's about to kill George, then I'll definitely give up my ring. What kind of crack are you on?" Dream said.

"The Blade won't kill him. Just don't do anything rash, ok? George can hold his own, and there's two of us." George said with a shrug.

From his point of view, if it really came down to him being killed, he would simply transform and shield. It would reveal his identity, sure, but he wouldn't die.

Dream can't give up his jewel for someone who can just save themselves.

"You're telling me that my jewel is more important than George?" Dream said, stopping walking. George sighed and stopped too.

"No, I'm saying-"

"George is one of the most important people to me. I would do anything for him." Dream said, and the amount of sincerity in his voice almost scared George.

"You... you care for him that much?" George asked in a near-whisper.

"Yes. I know you don't know him like I do, and maybe it's a hard thing for you to understand, but I am going to do everything to protect him." Dream said, and turned to start walking away.

"Wait. Dream. I'm... sorry. I didn't realise how much you actually care for him. I promise I'll do everything for him too." George said. Dream just simply nodded, but didn't stop walking away.

George sighed and walked in a different direction, transforming in a hidden spot and making his way back to school after finding his hidden school bag.

When he arrived, the bell had rung, and school had just finished. He closed his eyes in annoyance, but let out a sigh and looked up again as kids started filing out of the school.

He just wanted to go home, but Clay said he wanted to walk him back. So he waited.

Another ten minutes passed, until Clay came out of nowhere, smiling as he jogged towards George.

"Sorry I took a while."

"All good. You really don't have to walk me back, you know." George said. Clay shrugged.

"I want to." He said, and the pair started walking.

"You know about... the whole... *villains* after you and everything..." Clay started to say. George nodded. "Do you think you'll be attacked again soon?"

"Probably. But I'm fine. I escaped the villain at the amusement park before GNotFound even showed up. I can take care of myself. Besides, I trust him and Dream." George said.

"But what if the villain is stronger next time, and you don't have a chance and the heroes aren't anywhere to be found?" Clay asked. George shrugged.

"I mean, the whole reason Blade wants me is because he thinks I know Dream's real identity. Which I don't. As soon as he realises I don't, I bet he will get bored." George said.

"What if he like, threatens you? And the superheroes have to do something to save you?" Clay asked.

"They aren't idiots. They will do everything else before giving up his jewel. That's a last resort. Their jewels should be priority over me because the city needs them as heroes." George said. *And I can just transform as a last resort.*

"You're a top priority too." Clay said. George shrugged. "George, you are literally more important than both the heroes identities combined." Clay said.

"If you say so." George chuckled.

"So are you and Dream... friends? Like why does the Blade think you know him?" Clay asked casually.

"I said this at lunch when everyone pestered me with questions. He has saved me twice and learned my name. He said my name when saving me and apparently he sounded worried. The Blade thought he would know me."

"So..."

"So, we aren't friends. I've just been dragged into it somehow." George shrugged. "I've spoke to Dream like two times. He's not a friend." He added a laugh.

Clay was silent.

Of course, most of that was lies. They've spoken more than that, and George sees Dream as a friend. And Dream apparently cares for George as much. But George didn't want it to get out that they were friends. That could be bad for the both of them.

"Don't worry." George said, laughing as he nudged Clay's shoulder. "You haven't been replaced."

Clay looked up and a small smile grew on his face.

"Replaced as..."

"As one of my best friends." George said, a nervous smile on his face. Clay let out a full grin and chucked an arm around George's shoulders.

"Good." He said, squeezing his opposite shoulder. "I'm better than that stupid Dream guy anyway." Clay said. George laughed, ignoring the blush creeping onto his face.

"Because I'll protect you like a superhero would."

## Chapter End Notes

The next chapter is my favourite, I hope you guys will enjoy it.

I was aiming for this story to be 50 chapters but it might be a little longer than that because I realised this is already chapter 40 and I still have a few plans lol.

And happy 2022!

# You will tell the truth

## Chapter Summary

Even when given a warning to a supervillain attack, George goes to school. Clay keeps a close eye on him, ready to transform at any second if needed.

Surely the Blade wouldn't attack on a random Tuesday

## Chapter Notes

**TW**// unintentional SH

(it's not typical sh. if you need more detail about what I mean, check end of the chapter)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George woke up to a knocking at his window.

But the first thing George noticed was that he *woke up*. He was asleep. He would have fallen asleep around 3, and woke up now, at 6. He felt quite proud of that.

He looked at his window and did a double take when he saw a smile.

No, not Dream's smiley mask.  
Clay's bright smile and pretty teeth.

George sat up straighter. He knows he must look like shit. He just woke up, his hair is probably sticking up in every which way, he was in his pyjamas and had sleep still in his eyes.

He wiped his face and quickly got out of bed, going to his window and opening it with his mouth wide in surprise. Maybe it was because he just woke up, but he was having trouble processing what was going on.

"Your hair is so cute in the mornings." Clay said immediately, reaching through the window to pat it. George was frozen, still staring at his friend.

"What..." George just said. Clay smiled and helped himself through the window into the room, looking around.

"I'm walking you to school again, idiot. Sorry I woke you up. I know you don't get much sleep but you need to get ready for school soon anyways and I'm impatient." Clay said, reaching out to touch a small quartz elephant on his desk.

"Why are you here so early?" He asked. He didn't bother to ask how Clay even got up to the window. The blonde put down the elephant and turned to him, and George's eyes widened. "And why are your eye bags worse than mine?" He added. Clay's eye bags really were more prominent than usual.

"I kinda didn't sleep." Clay said, and coincidentally yawned.

"Why? What did you do?" George asked. Clay shrugged.

"Not much." He lied. Sort of lied. He sat on George's roof for the whole night. No reason, of course. It's not like there was a promise of a villain attack today or anything.

"I have to shower, do you mind waiting?" George asked. Clay shook his head, and sat down on the bed. George stood still for a second. Clay was in his room. This was weird.

He finally snapped out of it and grabbed his clothes and walked out of the room, to the bathroom.

After he showered and got dressed, he went back to his room to find Clay now sitting on the floor, comparing his shoe size with George's shoes.

"What are you doing?" George laughed, grabbing his bag and shoving his school materials into it.

"I'm comparing out shoe sizes. My feet are bigger than yours."

"Well, you are also taller."

"You know what they say about big feet." Clay smirked. George snapped his head towards him.

"Clay!" He said, and Clay wheezed, dropping the shoe and holding his stomach. George's mouth twitched into a smile without meaning to.

"Your laugh makes me laugh." George said, shaking his head and reaching for his phone.

"Your laugh makes me laugh too." Clay said. George rolled his eyes.

"Shut up."

"George, take the stupid compliment."

•

"Why are you so... hyperactive today." George said as he walked with Clay. They had biology and history together already and now it was recess. Next he had computer science. And later he had the math exam.

The math exam was the reason George came to school. Blade did say he would attack today, but he really couldn't miss the stupid exam. As soon as the exam finishes, he would leave and transform though.

Clay was super antsy the whole day. Constantly fidgeting, like *constantly*. And practically jumping in his chair with energy. He constantly checked his phone, kept near George at all times, and kept fiddling with his ring instead of his cube.

"I'm just... you know that stage of tired where you have so much energy?" Clay asked.

George stared at him.

"No."

"Well that's what I'm like. And... the exam! I'm just nervous for it, I'm not really good at math. Anyways, let's go eat." Clay pulled his harsher towards the cafeteria.

They sat down with their group and immediately joined the conversation. Of course it was about superheroes. Since George was now a target for villains, it was all his friends could talk about.

"So, Dream said your name once in a fight because he met you that time at the school?" Quackity asked as soon as George sat down. He groaned and nodded.

"I'm sure Dream and GNotFound have introduced themselves to many people. I still don't get why the Blade thinks that *George* would know his identity." Nick said.

"Yeah. George said they've spoken like, twice." Skeppy added.

"Can we *please* just drop it." George said with a sigh.

"Ok. I have a new topic." Quackity put a hand up. "Prom." He grinned.

"That's like a month away." Nick said in response.

"It's not fair we can't go to your stupid *senior prom*." Tommy, the sophomore, scoffed.

"I don't even want to think about that stupid dance." George muttered.

"It's not stupid George." Darryl chimed in. "It's fun!"

"Not if you don't have a date." Quackity sighed.

"We can all go as friends! A big group!" Darryl said cheerfully. Skeppy snapped his head up.

"What if I don't want to go as a friend group." He scowled.

"Well does anyone actually have a date they are planning on asking?" Darryl said, gesturing to the group. When he was met with silence, he shrugged to Skeppy. "See? No one has a date." He smiled.

Skeppy sunk in his seat, glaring at his food and muttering under his breath.

"Surely you all get dates. Just go ask someone." Tubbo said.

"I don't think that sort of thing is for me." George said. "I'm not even sure I'll go."

"What! Gogy." Nick stared at him.

"Why don't you want to go? It's senior prom." Clay said, nudging him. George shrugged.

"I don't know. Dancing isn't my thing and it's not like I'll find a date."

"Well, we are all going friends anyway!" Darryl said cheerfully.

"Can you stop saying that." Skeppy muttered.

"Sure you can get a date, George. Xavier seems really interested, even if you just went as friends." Ranboo commented, and everyone nodded along.

George gritted his teeth.

"Alright. New topic of conversation that doesn't involve superheroes or a dumb high school dance." He said.

It was silent for a moment.

"Did you guys see the new update for minecraft!" Nick said excitedly, and the group began a new discussion. George relaxed, leaning back in his chair.

"What do you have next, George?" Clay asked, not interested in the conversation either.

"Comp science." George answered him. Clay froze for a moment.

"Can I join?"

"What? Clay, you aren't in the class. You have... business studies right?" He said.

"Economics." Clay corrected him. "But I think computer science would be cool, can I come for one class?" He asked.

"Why? No, the roll is marked and you'll get in trouble for ditching."

"Screw it. I'm joining." Clay said with a smile.

George's lightheartedness turned to a scowl.

"What are you doing, Clay. You don't have to be near me every second of the day." He said. Clay chewed on his lip and fiddled with his ring again.

"I just like hanging out with you."

"No. That's not it. You're being excessive. I can take care of myself. No one is going to bully me. No villain is going to attack. And even if they did, you can't do anything about it. So don't ruin your day by consuming it with me." George said.

"My day is better when I'm with you." Clay said with another kind smile to make George stop being angry.

George was still annoyed.

"It's only an hour class. I'll see you at lunch." George said.

"Oh come on, George. Please let me join." Clay pleaded.

"No." George said. His voice final.

Clay chewed on his lip more, then nodded.

"Fine. But can we text during the class?"

"You sound so needy. But yes, sure." George rolled his eyes. Clay relaxed slightly.

When George eventually got to computer science, he already had a couple of messages from Clay. He shook his head and put the phone on his table, sighing in relief from the short break from his loving friend.

"George." A cheery voice said, and George looked up to see Xavier sit down next to him.

"Hey, Xavier." George smiled back.

•



Clay was terrified. The Blade said today. Or maybe he meant next Tuesday. Or maybe he just said a random day to scare them, and make them unprepared for the day he does attack George again.

George did nothing to deserve this.

But it's fine. Because Clay is not far away. If anything happens, he can transform immediately. And GNotFound also said he was going to stay near George.

Clay tried not to think too hard about where or how close his partner is. That would just cause a spiral that he didn't need while concentrating on George.

George at least was responding to his texts while he sat in economics. One of his least favourite subjects. He only took it because his dad forced him to.

However, towards the end of the lesson. George stopped replying. It had been fifteen minutes without a text and Clay was growing increasingly anxious, almost contemplating calling him.

When class finished, he practically sprinted out of the class and through the school to George's classroom.

Just as he turned the corner, he heard George's faint laugh, and he saw him standing beside Xavier just outside the classroom. Clay sighed in relief, putting a hand over his chest. George saw him and waved. Clay leaned against the wall, calming his heart as George finished talking to Xavier.

They hugged when Xavier left. And Clay watched him walk away. Xavier had similar features to himself. Xavier's hair was more blonde though, and green eyes were more darker, slightly shorter maybe, and he didn't have any freckles.

Clay hummed to himself. Xavier was attractive, sure. But he thought he was slightly more good looking.

"Clay?" George waved in front of his face to get his attention. He looked back at the small brunette in front of him.

"You didn't reply to me for ages and it scared me." Clay said. George rolled his eyes.

"Sorry. I was distracted. And I'm fine. It's not like anything was going to happen during that one hour."

They started walking back to the cafeteria for lunch.

"Yeah. I know."

"Do you? Like come on, people don't bother me about being gay much anymore. And the chances of me getting attacked by a villain like *right this second* are very low." George said.

"Touch wood." Clay said, tapping George on the forehead. It earned a scowl.

"Seriously. Nothing bad is going to happen."

To be honest, George should have learnt by now not to tempt fate.

For the lock-down alarm began blaring just before they walked into the cafeteria.

Clay reacted instantly, grabbing George's arm and turning him around, tugging him back down the hall, muttering to himself.

"Clay, calm down. Let's just go to a classroom. We don't even know it's a villain yet." George said calmly, still being pulled along. The truth was, there was a high chance it was, and he knew that.

He needed to transform before the villain found him. But it was very obvious Clay wasn't about to leave him.

Seems like he will miss the math exam anyways. Maybe he should have just ditched school to begin with.

There was a loud crash that came from the cafeteria they just came from, and everyone in the nearby vicinity began to scream and run.

"In here." George tried to pull Clay into a nearby classroom but the taller boy shook his head, still pulling down the hall.

"Too close. We should hide somewhere further away." Clay said.

"George!" A voice called, and Nick came running over, joining the pair as they jogged through the corridors.

"Both of you need to calm down." George said. There was a crash from behind, and he turned briefly to look.

Something came zooming down the hall, and George's eyes widened at a spear. He had half a mind to duck and pull down his two friends with him.

The spear hit the wall behind him. And George looked down the hall to see a villain dipped in gold, glistening from head to toe. He made eye contact with George and sent him a grin.

George was pulled up and around a corner, and then shoved into a room by Nick and Clay, the door slamming shut behind him.

"We need to get out. He's coming for this room." George said, now beginning to panic. The room was full of other students also freaking out and hiding. He ran over to a window and shimmied it open, a few other students following his lead. There was a bang at the door, followed by screams from the teenagers.

As people rushed to leave the room, the door slammed open and the gold villain entered, immediately making eye contact with George.

The eye contact was broken when Clay stood between them. Hands balled into fists and a sharp glare at the villain. George grabbed his arm and tugged, trying to pull him to the window, but Clay didn't budge.

"George Davidson." The villain chuckled, not seeming to care for all the students still escaping out of the windows, only the small brunette hidden behind the Mayor's son.

Nick moved forward too, holding a pair of scissors he somehow got.

"Move, kids. And no one needs to get hurt." The villain said, his hand tightening on the spear.

"Fuck no. If you want George you'll have to go through us!" Nick said. Cheesy, but sweet.

The villain shrugged and held the spear up behind his shoulder, about to throw it.

George ducked under Clay's defensive arm and stood in front of them instead. The villain hesitated,

not following through with the throw.

"George, go out the window." Clay said, pulling on George's arm. George stubbornly stayed, staring daggers at the villain.

"Don't you *dare* hurt them." George seethed.

In a swift movement that was far too calculated to prevent, the villain swept George to the side and pressed the spear against his throat. Nick and Clay both yelled.

"Move and I don't stop." The villain said to the pair, pressing the spear closer to George's throat. He didn't even dare to swallow.

None of them moved.

"They aren't going to leave, are they?" The villain sighed, turning to George. He looked back at the pair who were fighting the urge to run forward and grab George. The villain scoffed. "All I need is you, and I'm running out of time." He said, and threw the spear between Nick and Clay. They both dove out of the way and it landed right between where they were.

Clay landed on his ass, and had gasped at how close he was to being stabbed. He looked up at Nick who was across from him, also on the ground.

But when he looked at the rest of the room, he suddenly paled and jumped up, spinning around.

"George!" He screamed. His friend and the gold villain nowhere in sight.

"He disappeared out of the door with him." Nick said, also standing up and putting his hands on his head.

"Fuck. Fuck fuck fucking fuck." Clay said, pacing. He had to calm down for a second before transforming. But he needed an excuse to get away from Nick.

"I have to go. I need to... call George's parents. And find his sister." Nick said, and sprinted out of the room before Clay could even say a word.

Clay narrowed his eyes as his friend left in a rush.

•

"Let me go!" George said, twisting in the tight grip, desperately trying to free himself from the villain.

"Shut the hell up. You're lucky I can't knock you out." The gold villain muttered to him, pulling him out onto the roof of the tallest city.

George felt his breathing stop when he saw the Blade standing on the building with a sly smile. George was thrown on the ground at his feet. When he tried to get up to run, the Blade's trident was suddenly pressed against his neck.

"George Davidson."

"That's my name. Everyone seems to love it recently." George breathed out, his eyes not leaving the trident pressing against his adam's apple. "What do you want?"

"Has Dream not told you?" The Blade taunted.

"Dream? The superhero? Why would he talk to m-"

He was cut off when the gold villain lifted him up by the back of his shirt.

The Blade laughed, his voice deep and monotone. "I'm not an idiot, George. It's clear how much that kid cares for you." The Blade said. George tried to pull away from the grip on his shirt, but his efforts were futile.

He really should have taken the Blade's threat more seriously. Like, come on, they were *literally* told he would be attacked today. And he still managed to get caught.

*Phil is going to kill me.*

"You're going to answer all my questions and you're going to tell the truth." The Blade's then said, his eyes turning sour and he looked at the villain holding George up.

George was turned around and held by the front collar of his shirt now, and was being dragged towards the edge of the building. He tried to dig his heels into the ground, but to not avail.

He looked over his shoulder to see the edge right behind him, and he gripped the arm of the villain very tightly.

"What are you doing?" He asked, beginning to panic.

"No need to worry, George. I'm sure your little boyfriend will come to save you." The Blade said in a bored tone, standing near. George began to panic. If he gets dropped, he has to transform into GNotFound and use his shield, or he will die. But then his identity would be revealed.

George looked at the Blade, catching sight of the red earring that flashed twice.

The Blade only has five minutes left.

This gave George some hope, except the gold villain won't have to change back. So he would still be stuck here with the villain.

"I don't know anything, please just let me go." George said, scratching at the villain's hand. He was being teetered over the edge, his feet still firmly on the roof, but his head and back were leaning over it. He didn't dare rotate his head to look down. They were very high up.

"You will answer our questions. Do it now." Blade said, looking at the villain. The villain holding George brought his other hand up to his face, and it started glowing. George's eyes went wide at the gold. What was his power?

"You will tell the truth."

George let out a whimper as he tried to pull his upper body back to the stable roof, but the villain was strong.

"Tell us your full name." The villain said.

George wanted to choke as the words came to his mouth without prompting.

"George Henry Davidson." And his eyes went even wider when he realised he couldn't stop it at all. The words came out of his mouth without him initiating it.

This...

this was not good.

"Very good." The Blade laughed. "Ask him if him and Dream are friends."

George desperately thrashed and scratched against the villain, but they just responded by swapping hands and holding him directly by the throat.

He was lifted completely up into the air in now, his feet leaving the flat roof. George had both hands wrapped around the villain's wrist, gasping for air. The villain was holding him up, but not tight enough to stop him completely from breathing.

George glanced down, seeing his feet dangling in the air. He had no clue what to do. He had no plan.

He kept tugging at the arm, but the villain just glared at the hopeless attempt.

"Are you and Dream friends?" The villain asked. George bit his tongue, trying to hold back the words.

"Yes." He breathed out, squeezing his eyes shut. Blade chuckled in delight.

"How long?" He asked.

"How long have you and Dream been friends." The villain repeated.

George tried to swallow the words. This was not going to be good.

He was fighting it though, he was holding the words at the back of his throat. The villain could see he was fighting the power, and squeezed tighter, making George wheeze.

"A year."

Oh.

*Shit.*

"A whole year?" The Blade said in shock, eyes wide through the mask.

Suddenly, the door that came onto the roof slammed open, and Dream sprinted out, sword in hand and teeth gritted. The most amount of rage George has ever seen flashing in his eyes. Blade moved fast though, trident in hand.

"Move and we drop him, *Dream*." He said. Dream froze, looking at George being dangled over the edge, holding onto the villain's arm for dear life.

"George, it's ok." Dream called out. George closed his eyes. *No, it's not.* "He hasn't done anything! Let him go, he's just an innocent civilian."

"A civilian that you're friends with." Blade laughed. "Young George here just told us that you've been friends for quite a while."

Dream looked at George, who had tears in his eyes.

"Ask George if he knows Dream as a civilian." The Blade said, not taking his eyes off Dream. Dream didn't take his eyes off George as the villain repeated the question.

"No." George said, not fighting the answer. The Blade's mouth turned to a frown.

"Please let him go. He doesn't know anything." Dream pleaded.

"Does he know Dream's identity." Blade said through gritted teeth.

"Do you know Dream's real name?"

"No, I don't." George said, still trying to get himself free. It was useless though.

"Fuck." Blade muttered.

"What are you doing to him?" Dream asked, his sword still tight in his grip. He was trying to think of a plan. There were two villains and George was easily droppable. If he tried something, he couldn't afford to mess it up.

"This jewel is the power of truth. He is forced to tell the truth." The Blade muttered. It seemed like it was to himself more than Dream.

"And he doesn't know anything. So let him go." Dream said.

"Not yet. I'm not done with him." Blade said, inching the trident closer to Dream, who matched it with his sword.

"Ask George if he knows anything about Dream's civilian self." Blade ordered.

"What do you know about Dream's civilian self?" The villain asked. George asked when the nails dug against his throat.

"He- he's 17. He's in high school. He- he- NO." He bit his tongue harshly, closing his eyes. He could feel the word on his tongue.

*Bisexual.*

But Dream has only told one person his sexuality. His superhero persona. He couldn't say it. He couldn't. Dream would know who he is. He would know George is GNotFound.

"That is stuff that basically everyone knows. Please, please let him go." Dream pleaded, seeing George's pain. He could tell the brunette was biting his tongue or cheek. And the truth villain was squeezing tighter.

"What else do you know about Dream." The villain said, teeth bared and tone sharp.

George put his own hands over the villain's and forced him to squeeze tighter, blocking his own airway.

"Stop! He can't breathe, let alone talk!" Dream said, and George cursed him in his head. If he passed out, it would be perfect. He couldn't talk and couldn't expose anything. *God, Dream's an idiot.*

The villain tried to loosen his grip, but George kept squeezing, having both his hands over it.

"Stop." The Blade ordered. The villain growled and tore George's hands off his own, and George instinctively gasped for air.

"Let him go!" Dream said, voice breaking slightly at the sight of George on the edge of potential death. He stepped forward with his sword, but the Blade turned to him.

"Take another step, Dream. I dare you." He threatened. Dream stopped. He had no clue what to do. He needed to get George, but he was so easily droppable and he may not get there in time. *Ok. I*

*disarm the Blade, then I run and hope I get to George before the gold villain drops him. Assuming Blade isn't prepared for me to attack him, which he most definitely is. And-*

"Before we make Dream give up his ring to save him, ask George if he knows anything about GNotFound." Blade said.

"Do you know anything about GNotFound." The gold villain said.

"Yes." George was wincing, looking up at the sky. *Please don't ask anymore.*

"That's a broad fucking question. Everyone knows something about GNotFound." Dream said, staring the Blade down.

"Do you know what GNotFound's real name is?" The villain asked.

George could taste blood. He was biting his tongue so hard he was sure he would bite it off completely. He had his eyes squeezed shut, feeling the word rise up into his throat like bile.

"Yes." He wheezed, spitting out blood at the same time.

All three people on the roof turned to face George then. All with shock on their faces. But where the Blade's eyes gleamed with delight and immense amusement, Dream's jaw had dropped and his grip on his sword slackened.

"Say the name. Make him say the name!" The Blade ordered, eyes on George. Dream's own eyes flickered between the Blade and George, and then the trident.

"What is GNotFound's real name?"

George whimpered. And Dream could see just how hard he was trying not to say it. But he didn't even have time to think about *how the hell* George knows.

He swung his sword at the Blade's trident, knocking it to the side in a moment where he was preoccupied with staring at George for his answer. And then Dream sprinted at the villain and George.

"G-" George began, but Dream threw himself at George, colliding with the boy in a tight embrace. At the same time, he swung his sword up and sliced the wrist of the gold villain, making him let go of George immediately, the glowing gold from his hand disappearing in the process.

And Dream and George fell.

George had shoved his own hand into his mouth the second he could, biting down on the flesh just between his wrist and thumb. His other arm was tight around Dream's neck as they fell to the ground. Dream kept one arm tight around George's waist, still holding the sword in the other.

They plummeted to the ground, but Dream had a plan. And George had possibly a bit too much faith in his friend.

Dream swung out, slamming his sword into the side of the building. With his strength, it dug into the building, and with the momentum, he swung himself and George through a glass window. He let go of the sword to cover George's face, bringing his head closer into his chest as they smashed through the glass and into a random, empty, office room.

Coincidentally, the second they hit the floor, a loud thunderbolt sounded from outside, right above

the building.

Just a single thunderbolt.

Dream and George rolled together for a second, before finally going still.

Dream immediately turned George to face him, putting his hands on either side of the boy's head, examining him. George was ok, despite still biting hard on his hand. He had some glass in his hair, but no cuts on his face.

"I'm so sorry, George." Dream whispered, pulling him into a hug. George let himself be hugged and the glass be brushed out of his hair.

"I'm so, so sorry. Oh my God. I thought that was it. I thought they were going to drop you. I thought I was going to lose you." He said, trying not to tear up as he held the smaller boy.

When Clay pulled away slightly, he put his hand over George's wrist.

"Stop." He said, trying to pull the hand out of George's mouth. George's eyes were tearing up from the pain. "It's ok. He doesn't have his power on you."

George wasn't sure. But it was true, he didn't feel the lump at the back of his throat anymore. It must have disconnected.

He slowly pulled his hand out of his mouth and winced at the bite that had already begun to bleed. Clay put a hand over his and put the other one over George's cheek.

"Fuck. I don't know what I would have done if I lost you." Clay said, staring intently into George's deep brown eyes.

George wanted to cry.

"I told him, Dream." George whispered.

Clay remembered what happened and his hand that was on George's cheek slowly fell.

"You-" Clay swallowed. "You know who G is." He said in a whisper. George looked down and didn't respond.

George turned his head to the side and spat out some blood into the floor. His tongue was stinging and the taste of blood was almost making him gag.

There was a loud crash at the top of the building that brought back both their attentions. Clay grabbed George's hand and pulled him up, leading him through the room, making him sit down in a different one.

"I'll be back, ok? Please don't go anywhere. Please." He said, looking at George once more before closing the door and running back to the smashed window. His sword was still stuck into the side of the building. So he grabbed it and pulled himself up to the next ledge, climbing up the side of the building like he was spider-man.

He only just noticed the commotion from the ground at the bottom of the tower. Reporters and emergency vehicles and a crowd of evacuated people and onlookers. He didn't even notice them earlier, too preoccupied with getting George to safety.

When he reached the top of the building, he pulled himself up over the ledge and stood up.



The Blade was gone.

Lying on the ground was the truth villain, but now a civilian. He was holding his bleeding wrist tightly, and had his back against the wall. The entire roof they were standing on was torn up, with so much rubble. It felt like it could collapse at any second.

Standing up nearby wasn't the Blade, but Sapnap. He was holding his axe and staring off into the distance.

"Sapnap?" Clay said, and the boy in white with black spun around.

"Dream! Is George ok? Where is he?" He asked, jogging towards him, holding a gold pendent from the villain. Clay narrowed his eyes.

"He's ok. How do you know who George is? And why do you have your jewel?"

"Ph- I mean... *L* gave it to me. And he told me who George is. Said he was your fucking *friend* which is just... fucking insane. But yeah, I arrived just as you jumped off the building and I used my Bolt and got his jewel." He pointed to the civilian and handed the pendent to Clay. "They were both about to follow you but I stopped them."

"Where did Blade go?" Clay asked.

"I was going to fight him, but his earring started rapidly flashing and he jumped off the building that way. Onto the next one." He gestured with his thumb to the large gap. "I lost him. I'm sorry."

"That's ok. You did perfect, Sapnap." Clay said, looking back at the civilian who was still holding his sliced wrist. He had just been watching the two heroes interact. He seemed to be in shock.

"The paramedics are on the ground, with police. Can you take him to them? I need to get George from where I hid him." Clay said.

"Can I- ok. Yeah. Wait, *L* didn't explain to me *how* you made friends with George. Can you tell me?" Sapnap asked.

Clay narrowed his eyes again at the rookie superhero that he doesn't know well at all

*Fuck it.*

"I've saved him multiple times and we have had a few conversations casually on his roof when we both weren't doing too great. We developed a friendship. Blade found out I cared for George more than I should, and he thought maybe George knows my civilian identity."

"And does he?" Sapnap asked, eyes wide in shock at the news. Dream could imagine his mouth must be wide open too, but the entire lower half of his face was covered.

"No. No one knows *my* identity." Clay said, balling his fists in frustration when he realised the same couldn't be said for GNotFound.

"So George is ok?" Sapnap asked.

"Yes. He's fine. I'll protect him. It's my fault he's in this mess. But I'm going to take him to the hospital now. You get this guy." He said, nodding to the civilian.

"Ok. And sorry I was late." Sapnap said. "I had to go to *L* first."

"It's fine. At least you showed up." Clay said, turning to make his decent down the tower again. *Sapnap showed up. Fucking Sapnap. And where the fuck is G?*

He quickly climbed back down, desperate to check on George again since he knows the Blade is gone for now. He swung himself back into the room where he landed George.

But he froze.

Standing in the middle of room was GNotFound. Clay blinked at him before looking away and moving to walk around him. But G put out a hand to stop him.

"Dream-"

"Let me through. I need to check on George." Clay said, avoiding eye contact completely.

"George is gone. I took him down to the paramedics when I found him." G said. Clay stopped and finally looked at him.

"Where the fuck were you?"

"I'm sorry I was late." G said calmly. Clay scoffed.

"Did George tell you what happened?" He asked. G slowly nodded. "Everything?"

"He... he did." He was watching Clay carefully.

"What happened to *no one can know*." Clay spat out. G sighed.

"Look-"

"You trust him more than me?" Clay interrupted, his voice slightly sad.

"Dream, no. That's not what happened."

"I... you know what. I don't think I even want to hear this." Clay said.

An awkward silence fell between them.

"Can I-" Clay began to speak.

"No, Dream. You cannot tell George your identity too." G stopped him. Clay's face turned sour.

"I was *going* to ask if I could get past. I want to go check on George." He said through his teeth.

"Dream, you can't go see him. He's on his way to the hospital now and he's had enough danger for the day. No need to cause a scene at the hospital. The reporters will be all over that." G said.

"So what? The reporters knowing about George's friendship with me won't make him a bigger target than he already is. *You* are the one who put him higher on Blade's list now that George knows your fucking identity." Clay said.

"It wasn't intentional." G said softly. And Clay huffed.

"Well how did it even happen?" He demanded.

"I... transformed in front of him." G said hesitantly. Clay blinked.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Clay laughed with no humour.

"I'm sorry." G whispered.

"Are you sorry that George found out? Or are you sorry that he knows and I can't." Clay said.

GNotFound didn't respond.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Clay seethed.

"I thought it wasn't a big deal. And... and you never told me that you and George were friends either." G defended himself, reaching for excuses.

"That's because I only talked to him a few times. Not fucking told him my *identity*!" Clay argued back. This was stupid. This was a mess.

"It's going to be fine. Both of us are protecting George ok?" G said.

"Well where were you today then, hm? I was here quick. I stayed close all day." Clay said, staring down his partner.

"I got caught up. You know how difficult it can be to transform."

"What if George tells your identity to someone? Intentionally or unintentionally. Or is forced to say it to Blade."

"It's fine. I know, George, ok? He's trustworthy. He won't tell anyone intentionally." G said, trying to reassure his partner. But Clay froze.

"Wait. You *know* him?" He asked. G also froze. "Are you friends with him in real life?"

"I can't say." G said softly.

"That's why you weren't angry with me when I said I was friends with him." Clay laughed with no humour at all. "Because you did the same fucking thing."

"I am not friends with George." G said, balling his hands into fists.

"Well, whatever relationship the two of you have, it's clearly a lot closer than with me, huh? Now that he knows your identity and I don't." Clay said, just to be salty. G put his hands on his head. He was clearly frustrated.

"Dream-"

"I just... I don't get it, G. *You* were always the one obsessed with no one, including me, knowing. Going on about safety and privacy and keeping our lives separate. But *you're* the one that spilled. *I'm* the one that actually stuck to the rule. The rule that *you* enforced." Clay spat out.

"It was an accident Dream."

"But I still can't know, can I? I can't know who my partner is? My best friend? The boy I'm in love with? Out of *everyone*... not me?" Clay said, growing softer as he spoke.

They stared at each other, heartbreak and guilt and anger pouring through the room. Clay could vaguely hear people rushing through the building.

"I'm sorry, Dream." G said finally. Clay just scoffed and shook his head, walking past and not giving another look to his partner.

"Yeah. Me too, G." He mumbled.

•

George wanted to cry. He was hidden on the bottom floor of the building now, trying to contain his emotions before finally going outside to the paramedics. All of whom were looking for him.

He took a deep breath and walked through the door.

He thought cameras would be on him immediately, but instead there were countless paramedics and police basically blocking the way.

His new presence very quickly grabbed the attention of the paramedics, who rushed over with a stretcher. But someone in particular caught his eyes.

His father dropped the mic he was holding and pushed through a wall of police, sprinting to George.

"Dad." George sobbed, letting his father embrace him. He didn't want to cry. But with everything that happened and the familiar sight of his dad, he couldn't help it.

"You're ok, George. You're ok." He said calmly. When they separated, paramedics ran over and got George into the ambulance fast enough so he wouldn't be caught on camera more than he probably already was.

His mouth was still full of blood from his chewed tongue. He wouldn't be surprised if he bit off half of it. His hand hurt too, the bite mark bleeding and already bruising.

"I got called to cover it. Even on the camera, no one could tell who you were really. All we saw was a boy being held over the edge of a building by a gold villain. But I knew it was you by the back of your head. Fucking hell, George. Once you get fixed up you need to tell me exactly how you got in that scenario." His father said, voice stern. George nodded as his hand got bandaged up.

"I'm sorry." He said softly, hating moving his mouth because he could still taste blood and his tongue was growing swollen. His father sighed and hugged him again.

"You scared me so bad. I'm so glad you're ok. I felt helpless on the ground while my son was hanging off the top of a building." Mark said. George closed his eyes, letting himself just be in the hug.

"I love you." George whispered. His dad pressed a kiss onto the top of his hair.

"Love you too, George."

## Chapter End Notes

**TW** - the SH in the chapter is not him intending to hurt himself, and not due to a mental illness or any related reasons. He does not want to hurt himself, but in this scenario, he has to in order to avoid saying something he shouldn't when faced with a

villain.

(Biting tongue and hand)

Although it's not typical, deliberate SH, I wanted to make sure the trigger was mentioned <3

This chapter was one of the scenes I had in my head when I first started writing the story. So I knew we would get here eventually

Y'all should buckle up for what's to come

# You wouldn't understand

## Chapter Summary

Phil pays George a visit to figure out how to protect his secret identity. But it seems that the only option is certainly not a favourable one

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Two boys sprinted into the hospital at the exact same time, slamming open the doors and running to the reception.

They didn't even notice each other until the receptionist looked between them.

Clay and Nick turned to each other

"Nick?"

"Clay?"

"Are you here to see George?" They asked at the same time.

"Obviously." Nick chuckled. "We both knew it was him on the news because we literally saw him get yeeted away from the school." He said, looking at Clay as he spoke. He cleared his throat and turned back to the receptionist. Clay stared at his friend. Why did he sound so suspicious when he said that.

"Can we see George Davidson. We are his friends." Nick spoke for them both.

"I'll go check with him and his father." The nurse said, and got up to leave.

Nick and Clay remained standing to the side while they waited.

"He literally almost died." Nick said in shock. Clay swallowed and nodded.

"Yeah." He croaked out. "He nearly did."

"Thank god Dream saved him." Nick said.

"Yeah."

More silence.

The nurse returned and motioned for them to follow. They eagerly did, and were lead to one of the private recovery rooms.

They entered and immediately saw George lying propped up against the top half of the bed. He was holding something in his mouth with a bandaged hand, and looking at his dad who was sitting beside him.

But when the two teenagers entered, George looked up with wide eyes, and Clay and Nick both immediately ran over and hugged George at the same time. Mark moved away with a chuckle.

"Holy crap. You're ok." Nick said. Clay pulled away first. George pulled the thing out of his mouth, which was an ice block

"He's been instructed not to talk to much. He should keep his tongue still so it can heal quicker. A cold press every so often, and salt rinses after every meal." The nurse explained.

"What happened to his tongue?" Nick asked.

"Bit it apparently." Mark said. "Quite hard. He thinks it happened when they smashed through the window." He said. George nodded, knowing it wasn't true. Clay knew it wasn't true either.

"And his hand?" Nick asked.

"Also a bite mark. George claimed it was a nervous habit while he was waiting for paramedics." Mark said, sounding less sure of the reason, but George just nodded again.

"So you can't talk?" Nick said, a smile creeping onto his face. George's face slowly turned into a scowl.

"Until tomorrow. It's just to rest his tongue." The nurse said.

"So I can say whatever I want and he has no comeback." Nick said, with glee. George elbowed him in the stomach and he winced. "Right. Remind me only to do then when I'm far away from the bed." Nick added.

"I'm glad you're ok, George." Clay said softer than Nick, and George turned to him with pink cheeks and a small smile. He looked down and grabbed Clay's hand, giving it a squeeze. He grabbed Nick's too and squeezed it as well, looking between his friends.

"Thanks for standing in front of me." George whispered. Mark immediately scolded him for talking, but Clay and Nick just smiled. Nick ruffled George's hair and Clay adjusted their hand grip so their fingers were intertwined.

"I said I'd protect you." Clay said with a frown. George shook his head. "I mean, I didn't do very well though."

George shut him up by giving him a look, and then let go of Nick's hand to hug Clay again.

He didn't need to speak. Clay knew what he was trying to say.

•

**L**

We need a word

•

George was set to leave the hospital in an hour. Nick had to leave, and his Dad left to to get the car. Clay however stayed. Even though he was getting a ton of calls from his father and his assistant.

"Clay, you need to go." George said. Clay shook his head.

"Hell no. And stop talking."

"Clay-"

"George. I'm serious. I'm not leaving. I just- what if something happens to you again? I can't fucking lose you." Clay said. George frowned at that. He reached forward and grabbed Clay's hand, pulling the anxious dirty blonde close to the bed again.

Clay looked over the boy in front of him. George with his messy brown hair. George with his kind smile, his few freckles. George with his perfect face, and deep chocolate eyes.

George meant too much to Clay to lose.

Maybe Clay was finally beginning to realise just *how much* he meant to him.

"I'm not going anywhere." George whispered, and Clay pulled him into a hug, a hand pressed against the back of George's head to hold him close against his chest. Just feeling George's breathing made him more at ease. Knowing this boy was ok, and alive, and safe.

"I'm not going to let anything happen to you. Ever." Clay said, pressing his cheek against the top of George's head. "You mean too much to me." He admitted.

George let himself be buried into Clay's chest, hiding the blush on his face. Clay was just saying words. Kind words, to a friend. George needed to stop thinking they could mean more than that.

There was a knock at the door, and Clay finally let go of George, clearing his throat and going to open it. Phil entered, a hand on Tommy's shoulder.

"George!" Tommy said, jogging over. "Are you ok? I saw what happened on the news and everything. It looked fucking terrifying but so badass when Dream yeeted you through the window." Tommy said with his never-wavering grin.

"He's ok. He's not supposed to be talking because he hurt his tongue." Clay said, glancing at Phil.

"I'm glad you're doing ok, George." Phil said.

"What are you-" George was cut off by Clay.

"You've spoken enough. Keep your tongue still." He said. George rolled his eyes.

"I was worried and you weren't replying to the group chat, so Phil suggested we come visit you." Tommy said. *Of course Phil offered.*

George patted Tommy on the arm as a thanks.

"Are you hungry, Tommy? I can give you money and you can get something from the vending machines." Phil said. Tommy turned with a bigger grin than usual.

"Hell yeah." He said, holding out his hand to take the note, but Phil lifted it, raising an eyebrow.

"Where are your manners? Offer to your friends too." He said, gesturing to Clay and George. Tommy groaned.

"Would either of you like something to eat?" Tommy asked.

"I'm ok." Clay said. And George shook his head. Tommy shrugged and took the note out of Phil's hand.



"Clay, do you mind going with him to make sure he doesn't break the vending machine?" Phil asked. Clay hesitated. He wanted to say no.

"I promise I'll take good care of George." Phil said with a small chuckle, and Clay nodded. Phil was one of the few people he trusted to be with George. He'd protect him.

So Clay quickly followed Tommy out of the room, and Phil closed the door and turned to George.

"I know you shouldn't talk, so just nod or shake your head." Phil said. George nodded.

"Are you ok?" He asked. George nodded. "Ok. Good. I got a bit of information from Sapnap, but only from what Dream told him and from when he arrived." Phil said. George furrowed his eyebrows.

"Sapnap?" He said.

"Don't talk. Yes. I sent Sapnap to help. He took the villain's jewel, it was yellow tormaline, the truth-revealing jewel. Since it was a truth villain, did you reveal anything important?"

George nodded.

"About Dream?"

George shook his head.

"About Liberator?"

George shook his head again.

"About GNotFound?"

George nodded and Phil's eyes went wide.

"Does Blade know your identity?" He said. George quickly shook his head. "Does he know you *know* GNotFound's identity." Phil said. George nodded. "Crap. Ok. This is serious. Dream knows you know?" Another nod. "He isn't happy is he." George shook his head. "I'll talk to him. Meanwhile, we need to figure out what to do with you." Phil hummed.

"No more truth villain." George said, and Phil sent him a glare at talking.

"Sure. No more villain that makes you tell the truth. But you know what there still is? A villain who can manipulate you into doing whatever he wants. Including say what you know. Blade can just make you say the name." Phil said, running a hand down his face. George winced. He didn't think of that.

The door swung open, and Clay entered.

"I lost Tommy already." He said, looking at Phil awkwardly.

"Of course." Phil sighed. "Let's go find him." He said, gesturing for Clay to follow him out.

"Wait." Clay tried to look back into the room at George, but Phil closed the door.

"He'll be fine for the two minutes we talk." Phil assured him, leading him into an empty room nearby.

"Did you hear about what happened?" Clay asked nervously.

"Yes. GNotFound came to visit me after it occurred and explained everything. And that the Blade discovered that George knows his identity unfortunately." Phil said.

Clay stared at him, and then he narrowed his eyes.

"You already knew that George knows GNotFound's identity, didn't you!" His voice raised slightly, but Phil shushed him.

"Yes. I knew. I need you to calm down. What do you know about George knowing GNotFound's identity?" Phil asked.

"G told me that it was an accident." Clay said, still glaring at the man in front of him. "That he transformed in front of George or something. And he didn't bother to tell me. But apparently he told you. Why were you so mad at me for just befriending George, but not at G for revealing his identity to him." Clay mumbled. Phil nodded.

"I am mad at him, but we have bigger issues. And I know you're frustrated, but we need to focus on George being a much higher priority case for Blade now. His jewel is probably recharged. He can attack at any time from now." Phil said.

"Then why did we leave George alone in that room!" Clay said, gesturing vaguely in frustration to the door.

"We will go back in a second. Look, me and GNotFound are going to organise a better method of watching over George. We will take care of it. You just need to keep doing what you were doing, be close to him as much as possible and be ready to transform when needed." Phil said.

"But that didn't work that well. I barely got there in time and G was nowhere to be found either. We need a better method." Clay said.

"We'll do you have any suggestions?"

"Of course I do." Clay scoffed. "I've been thinking about George non-stop since I thought he could be danger. I have lots of ideas. One-"

"You've been thinking about George non-stop for days?" Phil said, a raised eyebrow.

And Clay...

Clay *blushed*.

"N-not like *that*. Just how I put him in danger and how I can fix it. Just, shut up." Clay said, and Phil suppressed a smile.

"Anyway. One, we give George a jewel." Clay said.

Phil's eyebrows lifted again, this time in surprise.

"That way, if he is ever attacked, he can just transform into a superhero and defend himself. And it doesn't matter if he the Blade knows it's him, because he is already after him, and it can just be a simple jewel." Clay said.

"I'm impressed. That is actually a very good idea. However, George's privacy is important too. We can't have the whole city knowing he has a jewel and transforms because he is being targeted.

Civilians are not supposed to know identities, otherwise George will never have an escape from that life." Phil said, saying the only excuse he could come up with.

George can't have a jewel because he already has one. If he is wearing both and says Mask on, then they will both activate, and the same thing that happened to Phil will happen to him. He will get overpowered. And he can't take off his Sapphire, because it's safest spot is on George.

"Whatever. Ok. What if I am transformed the whole time, and just be his bodyguard? Or like, I'll pose as the school's bodyguard or something. Then I won't have to find an excuse to transform, I'll already be transformed." Clay said.

"Being in plain sight as a hero will just get people to come up to you, distracting you. It will bring reporters to the school. Also, you can't just be Dream 24/7. Your father will be wondering where you are." Phil said.

Clay scoffed.

"And don't you want to be yourself, too? If you are always Dream, there will be no Clay." Phil added.

"Is that a bad thing?" Clay scoffed. Phil sighed, and put a hand on Clay's shoulder.

"Let me and GNotFound sort this."

"But I'm apart of this too! And I got George into this mess in the first place." Clay argued back.

"Yes, you are still protecting him, but-"

"What if we erase his memory! With that jewel we fought that once time." Clay then said.

Phil froze again.

"But not erase his entire memory. Just the fact that George knows GNotFound's real name." Clay said.

It was a brilliant idea. But there was one major issue that Clay couldn't know.

So Phil lied once again.

"See, the thing is... that jewel... it's a bit more complicated than that." Phil said, rubbing the back of his neck.

"How? That would make everything so much easier." Clay said.

"To do that, we have to erase the... *entire* person from his memory. He uh... he won't know who GNotFound is *or* who his civilian form is." Phil said, a half lie. That's not how the jewel works, but in this case, it technically is.

"That's not that big of a deal."

"It is when it's someone George knows in real life." Phil said, a strong gaze at Clay to see his reaction. Clay just froze.

"So it's true. They are friends." He said. Phil didn't respond. "So erasing that name from George's mind means he won't know them at all. And that will make it obvious to who it is." Clay said, repressing his instinct to investigate who GNotFound is.

George knows GNotFound in real life. So they really are friends.

"And just because you erase his memory, doesn't change how much of a target he is. He was a target before Blade found out he knows GNotFound's identity. Because you care enough to sacrifice something for him." Phil said.

"So what do we do? I can't let him get hurt. It's my fault he is even a target in the first place. I don't think I could live with myself if he gets hurt again." Clay said, more softer than before.

"George will be ok. He is very strong and stubborn himself. And he has you. He has Dream, who will jump in and save him and protect him from the world. But he also has Clay, a friend he can rely on, and someone he trusts. Just be there for him, and watch over him, and he will be ok." Phil said.

"And he has GNotFound." Clay added, and Phil hesitated before nodding. "If I knew his identity too-"

"Clay, we've spoken about this." Phil sighed.

"I know. I know. But... literally all three of you know GNotFound's identity. You, G, and George. Why can't I? What does one more person change? I'm one of the most important, why can't I just know too." Clay said.

"Because there is already two extra people that Blade can get the information from. We don't need more." Phil replied.

"If Blade ever gets close enough to actually get me to reveal stuff. He would be after *my* name and jewel, and by that point, we are screwed anyway. If I knew G's identity, and he knew mine. We can work together to protect George as our civilian selves. Not just hope that the other person is somewhere near." Clay argued back.

"Clay. I'm not having this conversation again." Phil said.

"Why does George get to know, and I don't!" Clay yelled. Phil shushed him again. "It's not fair! I don't care how they know each other, because I've known G for so fucking long. We probably see each other more."

"Clay." Phil warned him.

"No! It's not fair! Why can't *I* know who the boy I'm in love with really is! Why am I left in the dark! Why do I care so much *more* than he does." Clay had his hands in fists.

Phil's jaw dropped.

*Dream was in love with GNotFound*  
*Clay was in love with George.*

"You... you are in love with GNotFound?" Phil practically whispered.

"Yes. I've loved him for basically a year." Clay mumbled back, looking at his feet.

Phil took a few seconds to process.

"Do you remember what I said in the letter?" He said carefully.

"I'm going to be honest, Phil. I didn't really read your stupid letter." Clay spat back. Phil didn't

respond, just took a calm breath. He didn't want to argue.

"I said not to get close to each other. You are partners, nothing more. I didn't want you to become friends, and I certainly didn't want you to become more than that. Because having people you care about is a weakness. My goal was for you to be co-workers."

Clay glared at him.

"But alas, it seems like friendship was inevitable. Love, however... love is dangerous."

"Dangerous." Clay echoed.

"Yes. Have you... have you told him? G?" Phil asked.

"Yes. He rejected me. Said I couldn't love him if I don't even know his name. Said he doesn't love me. Said he's in love with someone else." Clay mumbled.

"I see." Phil said, lips pressed. "Clay..."

"I know. I know he's probably right. But I can't help who I love, ok? I've tried moving on. But all I can see is G."

Clay closed his eyes.

"I just want to know who the guy I'm in love with really is." He whispered.

Phil wanted to punch the teenager, and then himself. So from what Clay said, George rejected him because he loves someone else. Although he has no idea who the person George apparently likes is, but the fact that Dream loves one person and not the one under the mask must not make George feel particularly great about himself.

And if Phil is being honest, he thought Clay actually did like George. Up until he revealed he liked GNotFound. Maybe Clay doesn't like George. But maybe he does but doesn't realise because he's blinded by his partner.

Either way, Clay is an idiot.

"Phiiiiil!" A voice echoed in the hall.

"That's Tommy." Phil said, still watching Clay carefully. The boy was staring at him feet, but nodded when he spoke.

"I'll protect George." Clay said, looking up at Phil, who put a hand on his shoulder again and turned him around to the door.

"I know you will."

They walked back into the hallway, and saw Tommy wondering around aimlessly.

"Tommy, where did you go?" Clay called out to him. The blonde jogged over to them with a grin.

"To the vending machine! You were the one who was too slow. Come on, Big C." He grabbed Clay's sleeve and pulled him back. Clay turned back to look at George's room, and then at Phil with a worried expression.

"I'll check on him." Phil reassured the boy, and then walked back into George's room.

The brunet was scrolling on his phone, the small ice pack in his mouth. But he looked up when Phil came back in.

"We found Tommy. It took a while." Phil said, walking over to George. "Ok. I have one plan, and I think it's the best we have got."

George took the cold press out of his mouth and nodded for Phil to continued.

"If before you didn't care about getting hurt, you should care about your safety more, now that your identify could be compromised." Phil said.

"I'll be quicker this time, I'll transform before a villain can get to me, like the theme park." George said, and Phil scowled at him.

"You shouldn't be talking."

"My tongue is fine. It's pretty numb anyway." George dismissed. "So as I was saying, it won't happen again. I'll be quicker."

"George, we both know that's not good enough of a plan." Phil said. The boy groaned.

"Then what's your plan?" George sighed.

"There's two parts to it. First, I'm giving Sapnap his jewel permanently." Phil said.

"What!" George sat up in the bed, immediately glaring at Phil.

"Calm down. It's only to help if *you* are ever the target. He will be under orders not to transform for just any attack. Only when George Davidson is in danger."

"No. No, you can't do that. You don't understand the pressure that it will put on him." George said, heart aching for the boy he didn't know.

"That's why it's not every time. He will not be on call. Just for when you are in danger. If George is in danger, we know there is no GNotFound, and Dream needs backup. He would obviously be expecting GNotFound, but that's not an option. Don't worry, Sapnap will be fine. It's just for those specific scenarios. Everything else will be just you and Dream." Phil said.

George chewed on his lip in thought for a moment, but then nodded. It made sense, for Dream to have backup if he couldn't be there.

"But the best plan is to avoid George being attacked in the first place."

George hummed in response, waiting for Phil to continue.

"If there is no George to find, there is no George to take." Phil said.

George's heart sunk, and his shoulders did at the same time. He new where this is going.

"You need to be GNotFound more than you are George. Any free time you have, just transform and stay hidden. Then there is no way Blade can find you and get the information." Phil said.

"So you're saying I should just always be GNotFound." George frowned, and started fiddling with the cold pack in his hands.

"No. Not all the time." Phil said, slightly sadly, almost guilty. "Go to school, see your family for

meals. But other than that... yeah."

"Really?" George asked softly.

The line between his real identity and his hero self was growing even more blurred.

"I think it's our best, and only option." Phil said.

George nodded, leaning back in the bed. He was still grounded through. So if his parents realised he wasn't home, he would be even more of a disappointment.

So his life would now be breakfast, school, GNotFound, dinner, GNotFound. Goodbye friends. Goodbye sleep.

Not that he had must sleep in the first place.

"Starting tonight?" George asked. Phil hummed.

"No." He decided. "Go be George tonight. You're parents are probably concerned for you since today and may check on you in the night. But starting tomorrow after school, yes." Phil said.

"Ok." George said in a small voice.

The room was silent for a brief moment.

"Have you spoken to Dream since the incident?" George asked. It seemed like the both of them had forgotten he shouldn't be speaking much.

"Briefly. He came to see me, but had to go." Phil lied with ease.

"How mad was he?" He asked in a softer voice.

"He... he was mostly just frustrated. And upset he couldn't know. But he's ok. He knows the rule." Phil said.

"It's harder for him to accept not knowing our identities than me." George sighed.

"I know. He told me he's in love with you." Phil said, and George snapped his head up to him with shock on his face.

"He told you? Are you mad?"

"I'm not mad. You two already care for each other as friends. So long as nothing gets in the way of your jobs, then I don't mind." He said.

"So he... he told you that I don't like him back?" George said, and Phil nodded.

"Yes." Phil paused for a moment. "So... who do you like?" Phil then asked, and George scoffed and sent him a glare.

"Why would I tell you?"

"I'm just curious." Phil chuckled.

"Yeah." George scoffed, then sighed. "Alright I'll tell you. Only because you know my biggest secret already anyways. What's one more? But you can't tell anyone."

"Who would I tell?" Phil said with a smile. George took a deep breath.

"It's Clay." He blushed, eyes darting to the door. "I just... I don't know, I've liked him for ages. But he said he likes someone else, a girl apparently. So I guess there isn't much hope... but I still can't help but like him." George rambled.

He didn't realise how still Phil had gone. How pale his face had become.

Because George and Clay were in love with each other.

And he was the only one that knew.

•

"I'm fine, Mom." George shrugged her off, sitting down on his bed. His mother sighed and stood next to his father.

"You had a big day. I think you should have an early night. Want me to get your pills now?"

"Whatever." George grumbled. "I just want to see my friends."

"You saw Nick and Clay today." Mark said. George huffed.

"In a hospital bed. They... they all want to go ice skating soon. And see a movie. And go to Skeppy's for a swim in his pool. And hang out, and plan for prom. But I'm still grounded." George said. His parents both looked at each other. "And I know today doesn't help at all, because I got hurt, and that probably means you don't want me leaving the house ever. But it's nearly the end of my senior year and I may be going to Stanford and I want to hang out with my friends as much as I can before everything changes." George said, tears in his eyes.

But he wasn't crying because of what he was saying.

He was crying because he was *lying*.

Lying, because as much as he wanted to enjoy his senior year with his friends, he was lying to get out of being grounded so he could hide on rooftops in a blue suit for hours on end with no company. Just so he can protect the city and save people's lives.

His parents thought he was crying to get his freedom.

He was crying because he didn't have any at all.

•

George was sitting on his bed, staring at his window. He was waiting.

He spat out his pills a few hours ago. He was just sitting, waiting.

He knew Dream would come to see him.

As he was waiting, his phone rang. It was Nick, and he picked up with a confused look on his face.

"Nick?" He said.

"Hey, how are you after today?"

"I'm good, feeling much better. I'll come into school tomorrow." George said.



"That's good. Um, I was just wondering if you were free to talk or something? Unless you took your pills." Nick said.

But George was right about Dream coming of course. Because a smiley face mask appeared in his window, staring straight at him. It made him jump due to the unexpectedness, but he quickly relaxed.

"Oh. Um. Yeah, I'm sorry, Nick. I took the pills like half an hour ago and-" he cut himself off with a fake yawn. "I'm about to crash. Can we talk tomorrow?" He said, gesturing for Dream to wait a moment.

"Oh, yeah, of course. No problem. Have a good sleep Gogy, you need it after the day you had." Nick said. George smiled.

"Thanks Pandas. I'm sorry."

"It's fine. LOVE YOU." Nick said, before hanging up. George rolled his eyes fondly but pocketed the phone and stood up, opening the unlocked window.

Dream poked his head inside with a grin.

"Want to go on the roof?" He whispered. George shrugged, like he hadn't been waiting, and stood up, and Dream grinned, jumping up above the window.

George leaned out of the window, and Dream was ready to grab his hand and swing him up, letting his feet land softly on the house.

"Are you ok? How are you feeling?" Dream asked, still holding George's hand. They both sat down.

"I'm alright. Feeling a bit better. Are you ok?" He then asked.

"Me? Yeah, I'm fine. Of course I'm fine." Dream said with a laugh.

"I mean about me knowing GNotFound's identity." George said softly. Dream's smile faltered, but he shrugged, looking away.

"It's fine."

"It's not. I know it must be frustrating. Me, this random kid gets to know but you don't. I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry."

"But I am." George said earnestly. He really was sorry.

Dream shook his head in response, and they were silent.

"I'm sorry. That I took so long to help you. And that you had to deal with that today. And that you got hurt. And that the Blade wants you more now." Dream sighed.

"Dream." George reached out and squeezed his hand. "Whatever mess I get into is my own fault."

"No, it's my fault. And what if it happens again? What if I'm not quick enough and you get hurt."

"I'm fine! I can take care of myself. Look, there's no more truth telling villain, just the Blade now, right? There might be villains who are trying to get to me but the Blade is the one who can force

me to say GNotFound's name. *But* if he has used his power of manipulation already on a villain, then he can't use it on me. Either he uses his power on me himself, with no villain, or a normal villain attacks me but has no way for me to reveal the information." George said, gesturing with his free hand.

Dream stared at him.

"Did you even hear me? I'm worried about you getting *hurt*. Not GNotFound's stupid name getting revealed. Yes, that could be bad, but you could get hurt. That's what I care about." Dream said.

George chewed on his lip. Why does Dream care so much.

"And just because Blade is the one who has to use his power on you doesn't mean he won't. He is a villain himself, he can just get you whenever. And he can control multiple people at once now, remember? Our goal is to not let you get hurt, not to stop Blade from getting G's name." Dream said.

"The Blade won't get me himself. It's too risky. Half the city still thinks he's dead and that's probably good for him. And it's not like he can be subtle." George said back.

"I don't care. Because he will still do anything to get you, to use you, to hurt you. And I'm not letting that happen."

George looked away.

"I was told that GNotFound and you have organised a plan or something?" Dream said. George nodded with a sigh.

"Yeah. It's not fool-proof, but it's the best we could do."

"I had a few good idea but they got turned down. One of them was me be your personal bodyguard." Dream said. George snorted.

"What?"

"Like, I would stay transformed the whole time and guard your home and go to school as security or something. But it got shutdown by... wait I don't know if you know about them."

"I know you have someone helping you and GNotFound." George said softly, referring to Phil, waiting for Dream to continue.

"Right." Dream cleared his throat. "Well, they said I shouldn't because I shouldn't be transformed all the time. Something about reporters noticing me at the school. And also my family wondering where I am. And also how I should have a life. But I told them that I don't care, that my life sucks anyway and my father wouldn't even care-"

George zoned out.

Phil told Dream not to be transformed all the time. Because he should have a life, and see his family, and not waste it protecting George.

But he told George to be transformed as much as possible.

That hurt a little.

"My other idea was if we just put you in lockdown or something. Like hide out somewhere where

you can't be found." Dream said. George scoffed, moving on from the twinge of hurt he felt, looking back at the hero.

"You're joking, right?"

"Not really."

"I have a life. And family. And friends. I can't just be locked up." He said. Although, that's how his new plan felt anyways. He didn't need a life apparently.

"I know, I know. But it would be perfect. And temporary. Just until the Blade gets defeated." Dream shrugged.

"That could take months. Years. You don't know how to defeat the Blade. How could you even consider locking me away?" George frowned.

"I'm not doing anything, it was just a suggestion. A good one, but clearly you don't want it." Dream shrugged. "I think it would be the most effective option."

"It's stupid. That's the worst idea. And... and GNotFound would agree with me." George huffed, raising his chin.

Dream paused.

And he pulled away from George's hand, bringing both his hands to the back of his neck.

"No, he would want you safe too." Dream mumbled. George had to stop himself from rolling his eyes.

"Do you really think I can just ditch my entire life? I know this is just one of your usual weird, impulsive and idiotic ideas, but it's just ridiculous. I can't believe you even considered that. How would I go to school? Or hang out with my friends? Or see my family? Or go to the movies? Or-" He said.

He was taking his anger at Phil out on Dream. He knew he was. But it didn't stop him.

"You can't do any of that if you are dead!" Dream rebutted, turning to George with a fiery stare through his mask. George glared back at him.

"He's not going to kill me!"

"This man has caused Doomsday! He's killed many people. He's willing to do anything for our jewels and he is not going to let you-" He poked George in the chest. "-get in his way."

"Whatever." George shoved his hand away. "I'll be fine. I have a plan-"

"Why can't I know what plan you and GNotFound have? I could help." Dream said. George paused.

"You can't... you don't... you don't know his identity." George said carefully.

"But I could! I don't understand why I can't. It would make everything easier! We could both protect you as our civilian selves and communicate with each other." Dream said. George frowned again.

"Knowing each other's identity is dangerous. If you talk in your civilian forms, then you can be

overheard... or tracked easier." George said. Dream looked at him.

"Well you already know his identity. Why do you get to know and I don't!" Dream yelled. George leaned away at the volume.

"I... I know him. Like... I've known him for a long time." George said quickly.

"I've known G for a whole year! He's my friend. He's... he's the love of my life. Why can't I know the love of my life? You wouldn't understand how it feels to be in love with someone who doesn't love you, someone you've known for so long. You wouldn't understand the struggle of them only calling you a friend. Of them being in love with someone else." Dream rambled.

George's face turned into one of pure fury, and his hands balled into fists. He stood up and looked down at Dream who already looked like he regretted his words.

"Wait, George-

"You clearly don't fucking know me." George seethed. "The boy I'm in love with *is* in love with someone else. And I'm pretty sure I've even fucking told you that myself." George seethed.

"I know- I'm sorry- I didn't-"

"He's in love with a *girl*. He calls me his friend. He doesn't love me. I know exactly how you feel. Except the guy I'm in love with isn't just a nameless, faceless man. You aren't in *love* with GNotFound. You're just *infatuated* by his superhero self, you have no clue who he is really. This mask." George tapped the smiley face. "Makes *you* a different person, I'm almost positive. And so does his stupid goggles."

Dream stared up at George with a pained expression on his face.

"If you were *really* in love with GNotFound, you would be in love with his civilian self. So *fuck you* Dream."

"George, I'm sorry-"

"I really don't want to hear it right now. I'm leaving. I just... I need to cool off. Don't talk to me. Go home." George said, and walked back to the edge of the roof, sitting down to make it easier to climb back inside.

He didn't hear Dream move.

"Go away, Dream." George said through his teeth, not looking back before swinging himself off his roof, so he feet landed on the window sill.

His hand that had been bandaged today slipped, and he gasped, but his hand was caught.

Dream was still on the roof, holding onto to the bandaged hand. He didn't say anything, just held the hand as George got his footing.

"I said go away." George said. Dream nodded, and George pulled his hand away, grabbing onto the top of the window instead of the gutter.

"I'm sorry. Goodnight, George." Dream said, still on the roof. George didn't respond. And when he finally got back into his room, he closed the window and locked it.

He heard movement on the roof, and saw a flash of colour jump down in front of his window.

George curled up in his bed, letting his eyes dig into his knees. One of his last nights as George, most likely the last time he can meet with Dream on his roof, and he messed it up.

Like he messes everything up.

## Chapter End Notes

For those that are new, I update every Wednesday. And I post the reminder on my Twitter @LottiaraT

I have finally planned what is happening in each chapter moving forward and roughly know how many more chapters there will be. Don't worry, there's still quite a bit to go.

But damn, I feel bad for George

# Are you GNotFound?

## Chapter Summary

Clay tries to piece together who his superhero partner is

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George didn't sleep all night. It didn't help that it sounded like there was an animal on his roof walking around the entire time. He just decided to study most of the night since he's been slack on school work.

He was not looking forward to school. On the news, no one knew who the boy at the top of the tower was because his face was never shown. But all of his friends knew. And there was a high chance people saw him be attacked and taken out of the school by the villain. Plus, news spreads like fire. He would be more shocked if people didn't know.

He took a deep breath as he put on his shoes. It's fine. Because Violet was also personally attacked, and it wasn't even that huge of a deal, just a thing that happened. Clay had been on the news at the ceremony too, and then there was the whole theme park inside. Kids get hurt all the time. He's just another teenager that got attacked by a villain. It shouldn't be too big of a deal if people don't know he's specifically being targeted.

"Is Clay walking you to school again?" Lorna asked when he walked downstairs.

"I don't know. He hasn't said anything, or messaged. He might think I'm not coming to school today." He said.

"Well, even I would prefer you didn't. Your tongue is still healing and I hate the thought of another attack happening."

"Mom, it was a fluke. I'm fine now. My tongue is fine, I will rinse again after lunch." He said. To be fair, his tongue did still hurt like a bitch, but there wasn't much he could do.

"Alright. Well, would you like a lift today?" She asked. George shook his head.

"I want to walk, for fresh air. Is that ok? And after school Nick is having a few friends over. If it's ok if I go? I know you and Dad only just ungrounded me yesterday." He obviously lied.

"Yes, that's fine. You can hang out with your friends. But remember our compromise? You aren't grounded, but your curfew is 9." Lorna says. George nodded as she grabbed the keys and called for Lexi.

"I know. I'll be home by 9 each day." He said.

"Alright. Have a good day, George. If you need to leave early, let me know and I'll come get you." She said, kissing him on the top of his head as Lexi entered the room.

After his Mother and sister left, George finished getting ready and locked up the house before

beginning his walk. He was a bit sad that Clay wasn't with him, but also relieved at the same time.

He heard a sound come from his house though, and he quickly looked back. The sound came from the roof, and when he looked up, his eyes widened.

Dream was lying down on the roof, clearly asleep. George quickly ran back to his yard.

"Dream!" He whisper-yelled. The superhero didn't make a noise. George grabbed a rock and threw it onto the roof, hoping it would hit the hero.

When Dream groaned and rolled over, he opened his eyes and peered over the edge of the roof, to the front yard.

"What?" He mumbled.

"Why the fuck are you on my roof!" George said. It seems like Dream finally, properly woke up and he quickly sat up and then jumped down off the roof.

"Shit, what's the time." He asked, dusting himself off.

"I don't know. Like 8?"

"Shit." Dream said, running his hands through his blonde hair.

"What the hell are you doing here? I told you to leave." George said, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I... I was keeping watch." Dream said, still slightly drowsy.

"The whole night?"

"Yeah. But I think I fell asleep."

"Why would you do that." George asked, a frown on his face.

"Because its my job to protect you, dumbass." Dream replied with a smile. George was still mad from yesterday, so didn't smile back, and Dream's smile fell.

"You should have told me. And I was awake the whole night." George said.

"I know. I checked on you a few times. But I knew you didn't want to talk to me." Dream said.

It was true. George probably would have yelled at him again.

"Well. I survived the night. You can go home and get ready for the day since I'm guessing you haven't showered or anything." George said dismissively, waving him off, and turning around and walking away. But Dream jogged to catch up.

"Can we talk? About last night? I messed up. I don't want to fight. I know what I said was uncalled for. I was taking my anger at GNotFound out on you." He said. George tensed his jaw.

"You shouldn't be mad at GNotFound. It's not his fault I know." He said through gritted teeth.

"I know, I know. But I just haven't gotten a good enough reason for why I can't know who he is too." Dream said. George didn't respond. "I'm sorry. That's my personal issues. I still shouldn't have taken it out on you."

George shook his head, still angry.

"I'm sorry for what I said. About you not understanding how hard it is to love someone who doesn't love you. I was so wrapped up in my own shit that I was being selfish and didn't even think about you. You've told me before that you like someone who doesn't like you. But I forgot, because I was angry."

"I know it hurts, Dream, but you can't change the fact that they don't like you. You can't be angry at someone for not loving you." George mumbled.

"I know. G just means a lot to me and it's hard to move on when he's all I've thought about for a year." Dream replied.

"I'm the same. A whole year is hard to just move on from." George said with a sigh. "But I can't control who he likes. He's straight. I'm not. It's not going to work anyway."

Clay looked at him.

"So. Who is this boy? If you want to say. You don't have to." He said. George glanced at him, then quickly looked away.

From what Dream has said to GNotFound, he said he would stay close to George in his civilian form. It made George feel uneasy because everything he has told Dream may be closer than he thought.

"Look. I don't know who you are or how close you are to me, but I'm not that stupid. I... I'm almost certain that you know me as your civilian form. It makes sense. So I'm not telling you who I liked. Just... just don't tell anyone anything I've told you, ok?" He sighed. "I'm trusting you, alright Dream?"

Clay chewed on his lip as he thought.

"You think I know you?"

"It makes sense why you spoke to me in the first place. Not just a boy on a roof. A boy you *recognised* on a roof. I'm not mad at you... I trust you." George said, nodding like he was assuring himself of the fact. "But I don't want to know who you are. I don't care if you are someone in a different school, or a different grade... or a different class, or... or anyone closer. But I'm trusting you, ok?" George, glancing at the hero.

"You're ok with... with me knowing you as my civilian form?" Clay asked.

"I guess. I'm mostly just trying not to think about it too hard. I have more pressing issues to think about than someone in my school knowing my biggest insecurities." He said. Clay nodded.

Clay was also trying not to think about things. Like how close GNotFound might actually be as well.

"Yeah, I guess... I guess whoever you turn out to be... you're my friend." George said with a shrug. "Whether I know you or not, I trust you. And I appreciate you. And you're my friend."

Clay pulled George in for a hug, and it surprised the boy at first, before George melted into the hug.

"You don't know how much that means to me. And I have a good feeling that this will all be over



soon. I feel like everything will be fixed." Clay whispered, so much hope in his voice that it made George sick.

"You can't promise anything like that." George mumbled back

"When we defeat the Blade, for good, I want to tell you who I am." Dream said, pulling away. George chewed on his cheek at that.

"I don't know if that's a good idea."

"Even GNotFound said maybe we can tell each other. So if I can tell him, I think I can tell you too." He said.

*Well, if I reveal myself first, that could save some time for Dream.*

"I'll think about it. But right now. I don't want to think about anything. I'm trying really hard not to let my brain try and link you to anybody in my life." George said. Clay laughed.

"I'm doing the same thing with GNotFound. It would be easier if we could all just tell each other, but whatever. It is what it is. I'm just glad you aren't mad at me anymore."

"Oh, I'm definitely still mad at you." George said, but with a small smile on his face. Clay chuckled and nudged him with his elbow.

"Sure, Georgie. I believe you."

•

George was only a few streets away from school when Dream left. He seemed like he was rushing when he left.

So George was walking alone for a bit, until he heard his name be called.

He turned to see Wilbur and Tommy walking towards him. Wilbur was smiling and Tommy was waving, so George waved back and waited for them to catch up.

"Gogy! How are you feeling today?" Tommy asked.

"I'm better." George responded.

"George! My man. Tell me everything. Dream saved you at the last second, right? From that crazy golden villain that was going to drop you." Wilbur said excitedly. George laughed as they walked.

"Yeah. He came just in time. And he managed to get to me without Blade or the gold villain stopping him."

"Wait. Blade? He was there? I thought Blade died years ago." Wilbur said, eyes widening.

*The general population still don't know. The news didn't catch Blade.*

"Oh. Um. Yeah, he was there. I think he's the one controlling the villains. I'm not sure though." He said with a vague shrug.

"Wow. Holy shit." Wilbur said.

"I already knew that." Tommy puffed out his chest. "From the theme park attack."

"And why didn't you tell me?" Wilbur asked him. Tommy stuck out his tongue.

"Didn't feel like it."

"Anyways. You feeling good enough for school even though you were at the hospital right?" Wilbur asked, turning back to George.

"Yeah. I'm alright now though. Just a sore tongue and cut hand but I'm fine." George said.

"Yesterday you couldn't even talk and it was hilarious." Tommy said, and George rolled his eyes.

"So why are you guys walking? Don't you normally get dropped off?"

"Yeah, but Phil needed help at the store. He's making Techno help him today." Wilbur said.

"And then he's making Techno babysit us for the rest of the day. He's picking us up and taking us home and making dinner or something." Tommy said.

"Oh." George replied.

"It's stupid. We don't even want to be babysat. Techno clearly doesn't either. Said he has "research" to be doing. Whatever he's researching." Wilbur scoffed.

"Can't you guys look after yourselves? Can't you cook?" George asked.

"The last time Wilbur tried to cook something in the house, he set the curtains on fire. Phil said he trusts him just as much as he trusts me with cooking." Tommy said, rolling his eyes like it was ridiculous Phil didn't trust him with knives, boiling water and various hot appliances.

"Phil actually *does* trust me with cooking, thank you. But Phil wants Techno to be spending more time with us so he's forcing him to babysit us today." Wilbur said to George, who still wasn't sure if he 100% believed it. Wilbur did seem a bit insane at times. He wouldn't be surprised if he was just as chaotic as Tommy, just less outwardly so.

"Well I don't mind. I hate being babysat, but Techno has barely been home since he's been here." Tommy said.

"I don't care. He can just disappear completely again for all I care." Wilbur said.

"You don't mean that." Tommy glared at him. "Techno is great."

"He hasn't visited us in years, he doesn't care."

George didn't want to hear the siblings fight. He's had enough fighting the past day.

When they arrived at school, George had gym. He separated from Wilbur and Tommy and started walking towards the gymnasium. He got a few looks from students. They either knew it was him from the news, or were still obsessed with him being gay.

Judging by this school, he wouldn't be surprised if it was either.

Just before he entered the gym, he heard his name be called and he turned to see Clay sprinting towards him.

George smiled, relaxing slightly at the familiar face. "Hey, Clay."

"How are you feeling?" Clay asked. He sounded very out of breath, and a bit pink in the cheeks, like he had literally been running.

"Better. Still a sore tongue but nothing I can't handle. Are you alright?" He said. Clay nodded with a laugh.

"Yeah, just slept in and was almost late. Luckily my chauffeur was ready after I showered." Clay said, and swung an arm across George's shoulders and pushed the gym door open with the other. "I can't sit out of gym anymore, apparently my head is all fixed." He then said.

"Technically my ankle has been healed for ages and I've been milking that excuse for too long. But the attack yesterday got me an extra excuse." George said, holding up the bandaged hand. It really wasn't that bad either, but he didn't mind missing gym.

"Gogy!" A new voice, and turned to see Nick full on sprinting at him. The rest of the class was looking too, but George ignored them as Nick hugged him.

"Dude, you have barely been answering me."

"I so have!" George replied, wriggling out of Nick's hug.

"Nuh-uh." Nick just retorted. "You weren't answering my messages yesterday, I had to call you. And then you had to go, and you haven't replied to me at all this morning either."

"That's not my fault. You were being annoying and asking me a billion stupid questions about what happened." George retorted.

"Not all my messages were about the villain thing. I also just wanted to talk, cause we haven't in a while." Nick said, with a casual shrug. "And all we were told at the hospital was that Dream saved you from some dumb gold villain that you don't even know the power of! I want the fine details!" Nick exclaimed.

"Well, that's what happened!" George replied.

"Clay, can you believe this guy? Has he texted you much?" Nick said, poking his thumb towards George like he was crazy.

"Uh... I slept in so I didn't really get a chance to text him." Clay said.

"Davidson. You're on the bleachers. Block, Armstrong, back on the court please." The teacher called. George sighed and walked away.

"God, he's strange. Has a near-death experience with a villain, a superhero, and the fucking Blade and doesn't even want to spill every single detail to everyone? He really just doesn't care much about the superheroes, huh?" Nick ranted to Clay as they walked to the court.

But Clay's eyes fixed on Nick. *How does he know Blade was there. That wasn't on the news. Did George tell him that?*

He began watching Nick closely that lesson. They were still playing volleyball.

"So. Yesterday, when George was taken by the gold villain. Where did you go?" Clay asked Nick casually.

"I called his parents and went to find Lexi." Nick said quickly.

Clay may have been looking for hints, but his answer was almost too quickly answered.

"I see."

He paused, to serve the ball from the back line.

"I didn't realise the Blade was there." Clay said nonchalantly as Nick spiked the ball next to him.

Nick missed the ball and looked at Clay.

"I mean, it was easy to assume. The villain literally knew George's name and then took him somewhere. Made sense it was to the Blade, we know he's after George." He said, throwing the ball to the other team to serve. "Plus, George did tell me."

"Oh. He told you? When? Cause he couldn't speak yesterday and you said he didn't tell you any information." Clay said.

Nick turned to him, arms crossed against his chest.

He looked Nick up at down. How tall was he? 5'8? 5'9?

The ball suddenly hit Clay square in the face, making him fall backwards and the cut on his cheek start stinging exponentially. A warmth began tickling the inside of his nose.

"Clay, are you good?" Nick said, as Clay was on the ground, holding his nose.

He felt a trickle on his lip. "Bloody nose." He said, cupping under it. Nick helped him up and off the caught.

"Nicholas, take him to the nurse." The teacher waved. George stood up from the sidelines, jogging over. "Mr Davidson, you stay."

"What? Why? I can take him, I can't participate anyways. Nick can though, shouldn't he stay?"

"You already can't physically play. I need to grade you on your knowledge and passive participation. You need to stay if you want to pass gym." The teacher said. George scoffed, then looked at Clay and Nick.

"See you in English." Nick said to George, putting his hands on Clay's shoulders and pushing him out of the gym.

"Wait, surely George can come. We need to make sure he doesn't get taken by a villain again."

"He will be fine for the ten minutes I take you to the nurse."

"I don't need the nurse. I just need a bathroom." Clay said, sounding nasally as he blocked his nose. His hands were covered in blood.

They ended up just going to a bathroom, where Clay kept his head tipped over the sink as Nick paced.

"Who does George have a crush on?" Clay asked. Nick looked up, meeting Clay's eyes in the mirror.

"What? I don't know. I'm not telling you if I did know. That's George's business." He said, resuming pacing.

"Right. He just won't tell me." Clay shrugged.

Nick hummed.

"What about you? Like anyone?" Clay asked. Nick's jaw tensed and he scratched the back of his neck.

"Maybe. I don't want to talk about it though. It's complicated, I don't know." He said.

"Well, if you want to talk about it with anyone, I'm here." Clay said. Nick sent him a small, grateful smiling.

The only sound for a moment was the running water in the sink.

"Do you have any big secrets?" Clay asked. Nick snorted.

"Straight to the deep conversations." He chuckled. "I mean, doesn't everyone have secrets?"

"Yeah. But *big* ones. Ones that nobody knows, or only one or two people know." Clay clarified.

"Yeah. I guess. Do you?"

"Yeah."

Clay chewed on his lip. His nose was still trickling slightly.

"You knew Blade was at the tower." Clay started. Nick grew nervous, playing with his fingers.

"You left as soon as the villain took George and you weren't seen again until he was in the hospital."

"What are you trying to say, Clay?" Nick said. Clay turned around to look at him.

"You're close with George."

"I am. Speaking of whom, I want to go back to him." He said, turning to leave the bathroom, but Clay stopped him.

"You would do anything for George."

"Wouldn't you?" Nick crossed his arms over his chest.

They stared at each other.

*Fuck it.*

"Are you... are you GNotFound?" Clay whispered. Nick disappeared for the fight with the villain. He was close to George, a best friend. It would make sense for GNotFound to accidentally transform into someone he is around a lot. Nick protected George when the villain was there. He also had brown eyes, and a similar height.

Was Nick the boy Clay was in love with?

Even without an answer,

Clay knew it wasn't.

*Of course it isn't Nick.*

But he asked, because Clay's mouth runs a million miles a minute. Too fast for his brain to catch up sometimes.

Even without the obvious facts indicating Nick is not GNotFound. The most obvious to Clay was the lack of feelings for Nick when he said his name in the same sentence as GNotFound. There was no connection.

Clay may not know who GNotFound really is, and he may not be *completely* aware of his feelings, but he's certain that he would feel at least *something* for the boy he really is. He may be distracted and blinded by GNotFound himself, but he is sure his heart could tell if put in the right situation.

Nick, however.

Nick was now on the floor, rolling around in laughter, holding his stomach like it would fall onto the floor any second.

Clay put a hand over his eyes and let out a chuckle too at the idiocy of his question.

"I-I- I am not even fucking British!" Nick basically yelled, tears in his eyes from laughing. Clay was now laughing fully too, doubled over.

"Fuck. I don't know why I asked that. It made no sense in my brain but I still asked anyway." Clay laughed. Nick sighed, a hand still on his chest as he lay on the bathroom floor and a few last laughs escaping him.

"Bro. You've literally seen me and GNotFound stand beside each other at *least* three times." Nick said.

Clay recalled. Once, at the school. When Nick freaked out because George was missing. Dream helped him look, but GNotFound had to go. Another time when Violet got dropped back at the school, and everyone crowded them. Nick was right beside him that time as they looked at the tired hero.

And then at the theme park. When GNotFound literally saved all of their lives.

"I'm an idiot."

"No, you're not a *complete* idiot." Nick said, helping himself back up. "You had a good hypothesis. Just a bit off." He snorted.

"Sorry." Clay shook his head. Nick patted his shoulder.

"No stress. I'm flattered, actually. I would be a good superhero, don't you think?" He grinned

"An excellent one." Clay smiled.

•

George crowded around Quackity's phone at lunch along with everyone else to watch the news. Something about the new candidate for Mayor.

"That Callahan guy is really quiet isn't he. Haven't heard him speak once." Nick said, peering at the phone. The Sam guy and his running mate were smiling in front of the camera.

"One of our biggest initiatives if I become Mayor is to really improve the system with our heroes. They are two of the city's most important people and they aren't being recognised enough. If I

become Mayor, I will also change the Red Alert system, organising a special device just for the two heroes to receive alerts that are not life threatening so the entire city isn't disrupted. Dream and GNotFound have been helping us for over a year, and we've done nothing to help them." He said.

George raised an eyebrow. That device sounded smart.

"You mentioned that you had some evidence against Mayor Block and why he isn't fit for Mayor?" The interviewer said. George glanced at Clay, who swallowed and leaned forward closer to the phone.

"We are finalising the proof, but yes. Mayor Block did not get his wealth through legal means, he is corrupt and a liar." Sam said.

Everyone gasped. That was the first real accusation.

"What proof do you have?" The interviewer asked.

"We have documents that were provided anonymously that show the real transactions. Again, we are fact-checking them as we speak, but I'm confident that something is up with the Mayor. He has never been accomodating to the heroes, he's overworked them, he doesn't care about the city, and I don't even think he cares about his kids." Sam continued, with an added scoff. George glanced at Clay, who swallowed. That last part was unnecessary.

"An accusation without solid proof yet? He must be certain the Mayor is corrupt." Quackity said with shock on his face, similar with everyone else.

George stood up straighter, watching Clay, who was slightly pale. A few others glanced at him, but quickly looked away.

"Clay." George whispered, touching the boy's elbow. Clay looked at him. "You ok?" Clay just nodded in response, leaning away and grabbing his bag.

"I'll walk with you." George said, quickly grabbing his bag as well and walking away from the table with him. A few of their friends turned to look at them, all with slightly concerned looks, and Quackity looking guilty as he switched off his phone.

They walked in silence out of the cafeteria, a few other teenagers glancing at Clay, but he didn't even seem to notice.

"I'm ok." Clay said to reassure George, and sent him a tense smile.

"You don't have to be."

"I know. But it's fine." Clay sighed. "I don't know if it's true or not. I just... hate that I'm associated with the drama." He said. George nodded. He had no clue what to say.

"Nothing is going right at the moment. I give up trying to keep my life together!" Clay said with a pained laugh.

"Is anyone's life really put together?" George said with a laugh too. "So long as you have people in your life to help keep you together when you can't yourself, then that's all that matters." He said.

Clay looked at him with a smile. "You're one of those people for me." He said softly. George blushed and quickly glanced at his friend by his side.

"You are for me too." He whispered back.

## Chapter End Notes

Clay is quite an idiot isn't he.  
So is George, to be fair.

Probably one of the last few "chill" chapters. This felt more of a filler chapter but has some little important parts :)



# Rooftop chats

## Chapter Summary

An old villain makes their second appearance; and George tries cheering up the Mayor's son by taking Clay on some rooftops

## Chapter Notes

TW// domestic abuse

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay felt sick to his stomach. The hand digging into his shoulder was not helping with his nerves.

"As I have heard, the man trying to rival my place as Mayor has accused me of being illegitimate." The Mayor said into the many cameras. They were standing just outside the mansion, Clay, his Dad, and his sister. All being interviewed.

Clay didn't want to be here. But he was forced to.

He needed to be with George, watching him. But no, he was here.

"These kinds of accusations without proof are disgusting. They are also lies. It is upsetting for myself and my children. Both of my kids." He grips their shoulders tighter. "Have to go to school every day, and hear the taunts from other students regarding their father. These accusations are lies, and it is a disgusting tactic for a politician. Dragging not only my name through the mud, but my children." The Mayor said.

Clay stayed staring at his feet.

"If the new candidate for Mayor would like to have a word with me in private, without dragging the whole city into some petty drama, then he can." Mayor Block continued.

"Your children are suffering the repercussions for the accusations? In what ways?" A reporter asked.

The Mayor shook Clay's shoulder, making him look up.

"Would you like to say anything about it Clay?" His father asked him. The cameras turned to focus on him, microphones tilted towards his face.

"What?" He said softly, face paling slightly.

"Tell everyone what these false accusations have caused you." The Mayor said.

If possible, his grip grew tighter.

"I- uh-" Clay looked at the reporters, a swimming pool of unfamiliar faces and intense expressions.

"It's ok, son. You can tell them." His Mayor coaxed him.

Clay winced slightly. He wouldn't be surprised if there was blood on his shoulder after this.

"I mean... it hasn't been that bad." He said softly, looking at his father, who's face switched to furious for a second before back to a more calm one for the cameras.

"Really? That's not what we were discussing last night." His dad said, voice stern and his teeth clenched. Clay felt his eyes water slightly from the hard grip on his shoulder. It was for sure bruised.

"Tell them. Clay." David Block said.

"The Mayor is putting words in our mouths. We never said we were being targeted at school. It's embarrassing, yes, but we are fine." Drista said out of the blue.

Clay snapped his neck towards her, the cameras following a similar action.

Clay's eyes were wide. His father's glare had a new target. But the grip on his shoulder only grew, and by the way he saw Drista's hand bunch into a fist, he knew it had on her too.

"Embarrassing, you said Miss Block?" A reporter said.

"Y-yes. The fact that we are associated with the accusations. B-but no one is actually being cruel about it." She said, voice strained.

The Mayor forcefully dragged the two of them back, spinning them around and pushing them to Tracy who was standing behind, out of view of the cameras.

"Take them inside." He muttered, finally letting go.

Clay unclenched his jaw when the contact left, but Drista was less subtle, and she rubbed her shoulder.

Tracy very quickly got them back into the mansion. But she didn't say a word.

"Drista! Why did you do that!" Clay said the second they were inside. And as he spoke, he grabbed her arm and lifted up her shirt sleeve.

Dark crescent shapes were in her shoulder, bright red.

"Shit." He said, putting his hand over it to soothe it. Drista shrugged him off and put her sleeve back down to hide it.

"He was putting words in our mouths! And trying to get you to lie for him so he can farm pity points!" She said.

"Go to your room. He's going to be mad." Clay said, pointing to the stairs. She shook her head.

"No. Because then you'll have to take his anger." She said. Clay grabbed her arm and pulled her with him.

"Drista. Go." He said, voice stern.

"No." She pulled away. "I said what I said. I'm not taking it back. And I'm taking my punishment." She said stubbornly.

"Drista. Please. I'll handle it. I'll calm him down." Clay pleaded. She crossed her arms over her chest.

"No. You know he will be more harsh if it's you. You always take his anger when I do something. I deserve it." She said.

"I don't fucking care! Go!" Clay yelled.

"Drista! Clay! Get the fuck over here!" Their father's voice boomed. Drista swallowed and started walking back to the entrance, so Clay walked beside her, pulling at his hair on nerves.

"What the fuck what that?" The Mayor seethed, taking giant steps forward and grabbing Drista by her hair harshly and tugging.

"I was just being honest!" She said. Clay immediately shoved his father's arm off her, and pulled Drista away. He stepped between them, glaring at his father.

"Don't hurt her. She's your daughter." Clay said, ignoring the way his voice wobbled,

"And she fucking disobeyed me!" The Mayor spat in his face.

"She's 15. She's a kid." Clay said.

"Old enough to be a fuck-up. Do you know what that cost you, Drista? If Sam wins the election, we lose everything. I'll send you into foster care and you can be shipped to the other side of the country for all I care." He seethed.

Clay took a step back, pushing Drista with him.

"Go the fuck upstairs." Clay turned to look at her. She was crying now, and looked shaky. "You're making him more mad. Just piss off!" He muttered harshly, but gently pushed her, and she finally left, running to the stairs.

Clay turned back to his father.

"You both had one job. Stand there and look like innocent children. But you both had to run your mouths and make me look like a fucking idiot." The Mayor stormed forward, each step forward making Clay step back.

He looked around. There were no guards, no people. Even Tracy had disappeared.

"Y-you were the one who asked me to talk." Clay stammered as his father approached.

"Because I expected you to have at least half a brain cell to answer correctly, You were prompted and everything. But you fucked it up. Like you fuck up every single thing you do Clay. You are a disappointment of a son and a screw up of a kid. You should have died with your mother." His father said.

He shoved him, and Clay fell onto the floor, looking up at his father.

Clay has never felt this small in his life.

"D-don't bring M-mom-"

"I can bring her into whatever I want. Because she's gone and left her useless fucking kids in my possession. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. You're as much of a push-over, ungrateful bitch as she was." The Mayor said, his boot now being pressed against Clay's stomach, keeping him on the ground.

"Don't c-call her that." Clay said, beginning to tear up.

"I'll call her whatever I want. Because she's not here to defend herself. She's not here to see you be a fuck-up either. And she's not here to stop me from telling you as it is. You are a useless fucking child, you're a failure, and I'm embarrassed to call you my son." The Mayor said.

Clay was now completely on his back, the foot on his stomach rising to his chest, pushing down and making it hard to breathe. He wheezed as he breathed in.

"My life would be easier if you were gone." David Block said.

Clay let his head fall back against the ground, so he was looking at the ceiling instead of his sorry excuse of a father.

*My life would be easier too.*

•

George was sitting on a random roof in the city, transformed into GNotFound and with his phone in hand, the livestream of the news just ending.

That was a mess.

And maybe it was because he was obsessed with Clay, but he noticed way too many details.

The way Clay had a tense shoulder where the Mayor was clearly holding tight. The fear in his eyes when Drista spoke. The rough shove from their father. And the lies, of course.

The Mayor was just as awful to his children as he was to the superheroes.

George felt sick at the possibility it could be worse.

He didn't need to be transformed, there was nothing to do. But the strategy him and Phil came up with meant that whenever there was downtime, where George didn't have to be George, he would be GNotFound.

But he had no other choice. If there was no George to find, there was no George to torture.

So here he was, on the top of a roof near the city centre. Near the mansion, in fact. He could see it from here.

He could see a lot of things from this view.

And one particular thing caught his attention.

As quickly as it came into view, the yellow object had disappeared. Maybe he was going crazy from boredom, but he could have sworn he saw something on a building right next to the mansion.

He got to his feet and started making his way towards it, eyes trained to see it again, as he jumped from building to building.

Once he reached the roof of the new building, with a new angle of the mansion, he looked around but didn't see anything.

He hummed to himself as he looked at the mansion. Clay was in there. Hopefully he wasn't in too much trouble about the interview.

"GNotFound." A voice came from behind, and George spun around, snapping his bow on instinct.

The man who stole the safe was here. The villain. The green and gold one. What was his name?

"You." George said, lining up a shot. The man with the gas mask just put up both his hands in surrender.

"Awesamdude." He said. He didn't appear to be a threat, but George didn't lower his bow. Nor shoot an arrow.

"What did you do with the contents of the safe? What are you doing here? What do you want? Who are you?" George asked. Awesamdude chuckled.

"I'm not here for anything bad. I just wanted to meet you again."

"Bullshit."

"It's true. Look, I'll answer your questions if you just let me speak. I may have a jewel and I may have stolen from the Mayor, but I am not a threat. I am not going to try to take your jewel." He said calmly.

"Why should I trust you?" George asked, still not loosening his grip on the bow.

"I guess you can't. But I didn't take your jewels last time we met. I hurt Dream, yes, but because he was in my way and going to attack me. He was vulnerable and I could have easily taken his jewel. Same with you when I was invisible. But I did not. I have not caused any trouble with the city."

"You stole from the Mayor."

"With good reason. Now please, can you lower your weapon." He said.

George was extremely conflicted. The man made good points, but he was also a masked villain.

"No." George said stubbornly. Awesamdude nodded at that.

"Ok. I get it. I'll sit here. You sit there. And we can talk."

George nodded, not lowering his bow. He also didn't sit down as the man sat down several feet away from him, on the ledge.

"Who are you?" George asked again, letting go of the arrow, but still keeping his bow up.

"I can't say."

"Fine. Who do you work for?" George asked.

"No one. I work for myself. You asked me if I worked for the Blade the last time we spoke. That was when I discovered that he was even alive." He said.

"Why did you want the safe?"

"It had some stuff inside that is important to some people."

"What stuff? Who is people?"

"It contained documents of how the Mayor really got his money. And how he even became Mayor in the first place." Awesamdude said.

George stared at him.

"You gave those documents to the new candidate." He said in shock.

"Possibly."

"So you work for him? How much did Sam pay you? How did you get your jewel?"

"How I got my jewel is entirely unrelated to Sam. I do not work for him, either. I don't work for anyone."

"Then why did you give them to him? What do you gain from a new Mayor?"

"I think the question is what *don't* I gain from a new Mayor. This entire city would benefit from a new Mayor, someone who isn't David Block." Awesamdude said.

"Illegally stealing documents doesn't help anybody's case. It makes you just as bad as him, if you're willing to go to any measure to get rid of him." George said.

"Block should not have this kind of power over people."

"Why? What was in the documents? How did he get his money."

"The Mayor was broke a few years ago. Barely able to support himself and his kids. Then he got a ton of money and became Mayor in less than a year. Is that not suspicious enough?" Awesamdude said calmly.

"Tell me what's in the documents." George ordered.

"He had a big company with his wife, but some stuff went wrong when she passed and it got shut down. He then started some insurance company but he was actually stealing from people and cheating them out of insurance and stuff. It was completely illegitimate. He got a ton of money, and no one even knew he ran the company, so he got away with no indication that he was apart of it."

George blinked.

"That does sound like something he would do." George said slowly, and Awesamdude laughed.

"And then, when he moved to this city, and the election came for a new Mayor, he blackmailed people to add him to the candidate list, and then rig the votes."

George's jaw dropped.

"Are... are you joking?"

"Nope. And the documents are proof." Awesamdude said nonchalantly.

The Mayor really was a fraud.

"If... if all of that information gets out... and there is a new Mayor... then he will go to jail?" George said, swallowing thickly.

"He will go to court, yes. And likely jail."

George's first thought was Clay and Drista. What would happen to them if their father went to prison.

"Do you see why it was necessary to get the documents?" Awesamdude said. George looked at him.

"His kids..."

"What about them?"

"What would happen to them?" George asked.

"They seem like good kids. The son is almost 18."

"Are you saying that if their father goes to jail, Clay can just look after him and his sister? With no parents, no job, no money?" George asked with furrowed eyebrows.

"GNotFound, that's not the biggest issue. The biggest issue is that there is a corrupt Mayor who stole and blackmailed multiple people, who is in charge of an entire city."

"But they are just kids." George whispered to himself.

"They will be taken care of, I'm sure." Awesamdude assured him.

George was in shock. The Mayor, who he already knew was a horrible man, was actually a *really* horrible man. This was unsurprising, but it was still a shock. And all he could think about was Clay.

"How does the Mayor treat you and Dream?" Awesamdude randomly asked, bringing George back to reality.

"Oh. Um. Well." George didn't know how to properly respond. "He... well, he gets mad at us a lot. Like, a lot. Yells a bunch, tells us he owns us, bosses us around, says we are incompetent and obnoxious kids. And that we should give up our jewels." He ended up saying.

Awesamdude stared at him.

"You put up with that?"

"No. No, I argue back. More than I should, maybe. It's exhausting though. I've told him to stop calling us unless it's an emergency because every time we go there, it ends with screaming and me dragging Dream out of the room." George scoffed.

"You shouldn't have to deal with that. You don't work for him, and even if you did, he shouldn't speak to you like that. You both do amazing work for this city, and you're just kids. He should be more grateful."

"Thanks... I guess." George mumbled.

"Seriously. I really look up to you both, so does everyone else. Even if the Mayor doesn't appreciate you, just know that everyone else is on your side." Awesamdude said.

George stared at him.

"This is weird. Who even are you? Where did you get your jewel?"

"I don't need to tell you who I am. Besides, I won't need to be Awesamdude much more anyways. I inherited my jewel a few years ago, but there's no use for it now." He said.

"I don't understand what your motivations are. You said you don't work for anyone, then why did you go out of your way to get the documents? And give them to the new candidate?" George asked.

"I want justice for the city." Awesamdude said, and stood up. "Don't you?"

George finally snapped away his bow.

"Of course."

"Well, I'll be going now. This may be the last time we speak. But I'm glad I got to meet you again." Awesamdude said, holding out his hand. George hesitated, but took the step forward and shook the man's hand.

"Goodbye... Awesome... dude." George said. The man in the gas mask chuckled slightly before walking to the other side of the building, and jumping off.

George sighed, sitting down on the ledge, legs swinging as he looked over the city.

That was a lot.

He looked down at the mansion and his legs stopped when he saw something else.

A boy was climbing out of a window.

George jumped onto a lower building, to get closer. It was Clay obviously.

He watched as Clay climbed around the side of his house, onto a tree, and then jump over the tall fence onto a trash can onto the other side on a very quiet street.

George furrowed his eyebrows, and jumped over a few buildings to follow him.

Clay walked a little bit, and then looked into an alley way.

George jumped to the building next to it, and then when Clay entered, he jumped down into the alley in front of him.

"Fuck!" Clay shouted when George appeared. He stumbled backwards, and actually fell over onto the ground.

"Sorry! I just saw you and wanted to see what you were doing and if you were ok after that interview." George said. Clay looked up at him, extremely shocked and confused.

"GNotFound?" Clay said, still processing.

"Hi." George said, holding out a hand. Clay nervously took it and allowed the hero to help him up.

"Is there a villain? Why are you transformed?" Clay asked.



"No, there's not. Just running some errands. Are you ok? What are you doing in this alley?"

"Oh. Um. I was just... I wanted some alone time?" Clay responded, putting his hands into his pockets.

"I hope your father wasn't too harsh on you and your sister. I saw the news live."

"You did?" Clay asked with wide eyes, and George hummed a yes. "It's fine. I'm ok." Clay sighed.

George looked over the boy. He seemed exhausted, his shoulders were slumped and his breathing was irregular and not very deep.

"Do... you want to hang out with me for a bit?" George asked.

Clay's face lit up, in happiness but also confusion.

"You want to hang out with me?" He asked with a smile. George smiled back.

"If you want. I have nothing else to do." He said.

Clay looked like he was about to say yes, but he hesitated and his smile fell.

He remembered everything that has happened with G. The fact that he was the one who insisted on them keeping their identities a secret, but then went ahead and exposed himself to George, and then didn't tell him.

But Clay pushed away those thoughts. That was Dream's issues. Clay was a different person. He didn't have to be angry at GNotFound as Clay. And frankly, being frustrated at G was exhausting.

"I have to do something." Clay said with disappointment, remembering his goal of transforming in the first place.

"Oh. That's ok. What do you have to do?"

"I wanted to go check on a friend. I mean, he's grounded and stuff but I just wanted to go check he's ok. Especially with everything going on." Clay said.

George hummed, narrowing his eyes. He was going to check on George, wasn't he.

"You... know him, right. George Davidson." Clay said slowly, eyeing GNotFound.

"The boy who was being targeted by villains, yes." George said, feigning like he knew him in a professional manner. The only people who should know he has a... *closer* connection to George was himself and Phil. And Dream, who thinks he is friends with him.

"Have you met him as your civilian self?" Clay asked casually.

"Um. No. I haven't."

"He's being targeted by villains, then why aren't you with him protecting him right now?" Clay asked.

"I... was. But he's ok for now." George said. Clay narrowed his eyes.

"How do you know? What if there's another villain that attacks him?"

"George is in a safe place for the time being. And I am transformed so I can attack a villain if there is one any time soon. Until then, I don't have anything to do." George shrugged.

"Oh. So... he's safe? George is safe?" Clay asked.

George felt his heart swell with the concern about him.

"Yes. He is."

"Oh. Then... could I hang out with you?" Clay asked shyly. George smiled.

"It would be an honour, Mr Block." George said in a mocking fancy voice. Clay's smile faltered slightly at that, but he shook it off.

"What, um, do you have in mind?" He asked, fiddling with his fingers. George hummed.

"Want me to take you onto the rooftops? There's some pretty epic views up there which you probably haven't seen before." He said. Clay chuckled but nodded.

"Ok." He beamed.

"Great." George said, and without warning, he picked Clay up, and then jumped up, kicking himself off one wall to the other of the two in the alley. They made it to the top of the roof of the small building, and George looked at Clay.

The dirty blonde was holding George tightly around the neck, and he had slightly pink cheeks with a smile.

"You good?" George asked. *God, he's so cute.*

"Perfect." Clay responded, and George jumped onto a higher building, and then ran.

He jumped from rooftop to rooftop, relishing in getting to hold Clay this close, and the feeling of freedom.

Clay was grinning the whole time, the wind pushing his hair back and tickling his face. He had been this high up before, but never as Clay. He's never felt the breeze on his face like this, or seen the city through the eyes of a regular guy, and not through the lens of a hero.

The city was beautiful. The sun was setting slightly, creating an orange glow throughout the place, seeping through windows and covering the rooftops like a blanket.

Clay looked up at G's face, seeing the orange reflect on the goggles. And for a split second, he thought he imagined the orange reflecting in deep brown eyes, bringing out the specs of gold.

George stopped running, and reached one of the tallest buildings that overlooked most of the city. He carefully placed Clay on his feet and held his arms out to the view as if he was showing it off.

"What do you think?" He said, gesturing to the melting city decorated in pinks, oranges and yellows.

"I think it's beautiful." Clay said, never taking his eyes off the hero in front of him.

George sat down on the ledge and Clay quickly went to join him. George eyed him carefully with his arms out slightly as the fragile civilian let his legs dangle.

"Don't fall on me. I don't want to explain that one to your father." George said.

"I'm not going to fall." Clay said, looking at the hero. "You won't let me."

George stared back. This was surreal.

"Yeah. I would never."

They looked out at the view, just relaxing in the noise of the city and the glow of the sky and each other.

"Can I ask you something?" Clay said after a few minutes of silence. George nodded for him to go ahead. "It's about love."

"Love?" George repeated slowly.

"How do you know what love is? Like the difference between being in true and utter adoration of someone from the heart, and not just being infatuated with the idea of a person." Clay said.

George stared at the boy for a moment before swallowing and looking out across the city.

"I don't know much about love." George whispered.

"Do you love anyone?" Clay asked.

"My family. My friends." George said with a small shrug.

"I mean like... romantic love. Are you in love with anyone."

George looked back at the dirty blonde. His freckles were dancing on his cheeks and nose, his bright eyes gleaming in the light, his hair blowing in the wind like the earth was kissing him.

"Maybe." George said.

"How do you know?"

"I guess it comes down to what you would do for them. It's one thing to sacrifice everything to be *with* them. But another to sacrifice everything *for* them. That's the difference between love and infatuation." George decided.

"Which one is which?"

"Well, I guess... I guess it's about whether you are willing to give everything up, just for them to be happy. Including being with them." George said, looking at his feet dangling in the air. "If you let go of someone you love because you know it's the right thing to do, then that's love."

"But if I love them, why would I ever want to lose them?" Clay argued back. George smiled sadly and looked at him.

"You don't. But sometimes you need to let people go. If you truly love someone, you'll want them to be happy. With or without you." George said.

"Right." Clay said, staring at his feet now, watching them kick in front of him. He took a deep breath before asking his next question.

"Can you love two people at once?"

George stared at him.

"Like polyamory..?" George slowly questioned.

"No! No. Not that." Clay chuckled. "Like... have you ever had a crush on two people at once?"

George looked away, feeling his heart start to race slightly. Why was his heart reacting like that?

"Do you like two people, Clay?" George asked.

"I don't think..." Clay paused. "No, I think I do. *I know* I do. It just... it doesn't make sense. If I love someone so much, how can I possibly like another person too? Clearly I don't like the first person as much as I thought. Am I a horrible person?" He said, face contorted as if in pain.

"You're not a horrible person. And I don't think it's crazy to like two people. I mean... it would hurt a little I think, if the person you like likes someone else as well though." George said slowly. "But are they..." He swallowed the lump in his throat. "Are they similar?"

"Yeah." Clay breathed out. "But also not. Like there is so much between them that is the same, that I admire in both. But there are also differences. Like little tics in their personality. It might just be the scenes that I see them both. But I still... I think I've fallen for two people. And I feel so guilty about it."

George was silent for a moment.

"Who are they?"

Clay coughed, like he choked on spit and glanced at the hero beside him.

"Oh. Um. Just these... these two girls. One I've liked for ages that likes someone else. And one I've grown really close with as friends over the past few months but they have so much going on I don't even think dating is possibly on their mind." Clay said.

He pursed his lips.

"They... we haven't known each other for that long. I guess it has been a while now. I knew who they were of course, and a weird part of me wanted to be friends and get to know them. But I think I've been so obsessed with the first person for a year that I just couldn't fathom the emotions I had to this person as a crush. We're really close friends now and I've realised how much they mean to me. How much I would sacrifice for them." Clay continued.

George felt sick. Clay was so in love. With two different people and neither of them were him. They were two nameless girls that he was completely and utterly in love with.

"You love them the same?" George asked softly. Clay chewed on his bottom lip as he looked at him.

"It doesn't make sense. I shouldn't. I'm an awful person. My heart weighs the same but my brain is torn in two. I don't understand." He ran a hand through his hair and laughed at the ridiculousness of it all. "You're the only person I've told."

*My heart weighs the same but my brain is torn in two.*

George hated how much those words rang true in his own mind. But he shook his head to get them out, out, *out*.

"Right." George cleared his throat, keeping his gaze now fixed on a crane in the distance. "I mean... I don't know how feelings work really." He tapped his feet together. "I don't understand how you can find enough love in your heart for them both."

"Me neither. But I do."

They sat in silence for a few minutes. The sun was slowly going down and the colours in the sky were mixing with blue and grey.

"I don't know if I've ever properly thanked you. For those times you've let me leave the meetings with my father." Clay said, an abrupt change in topic but George couldn't deny it was refreshing.

"Oh. It's no problem, I just didn't think you deserved the stress of it. The meetings can get out of hand and you don't need to see your father in that zone." George said with a soft chuckle.

"I'm sorry about him. I know how bad he treats you." Clay frowned.

"It's not your fault, don't apologise. And I'm doing fine, I stand my ground. Can't say the same for Dream, but I speak for the both of us." George said with a smile. Clay nodded.

"I know you do." He said softly. "Are you mad at Dream for not standing up for you?"

"No, not mad." George said immediately. "Sometimes it can be a bit much taking the brute force of the man's words, but I can't blame him. Dream shuts down sometimes. I think he's just... I don't know... the yelling can get a bit much."

"You're a good partner. For him. Like, he's lucky to have you." Clay said, his words sounding slightly awkward. George chewed on his lip and looked down.

"I don't know. I've made some mistakes. He's mad at me." He said.

Clay didn't respond. He couldn't deny it.

"I didn't... I never meant to hurt him. Everything is just so complicated and there's so much to think about but I messed up and he's mad at me and I don't know how I can fix it. I can't fix it." George said. Clay frowned as he looked at the hero who almost seemed like he was going to breakdown.

"I'm sure Dream will forgive you." Clay said softly. "It doesn't seem like he can be mad at you for long."

"But I really messed up. And I hurt his feelings. I didn't mean to. I never mean to. I would never hurt him intentionally. He's one of the most important people in my stupidly complicated life. I don't mean to keep hurting him." George said in a small voice.

Clay stared at him.

"You two are close." He settled on saying. "I doubt there's much that can get between it. Even... even though he might seem frustrated. I doubt he could stay mad for long."

George hummed, swallowing the lump in his throat.

"I don't know how to make it up to him. I can't do what he wants. I just..." George sighed. "We don't have time to fix things. There's so much going on. There's so much we need to think about. Like the jewels, the villains, the Mayor, the new candidate."

George looked at Clay, who tensed slightly at the mention of the Mayor and his rival.

"I don't know if it's something you want to talk about, the new candidate..." George paused when he saw Clay visibly wince at the topic. "Sorry. I won't bring it up."

"No, it's fine. I think the Sam guy could be a good Mayor. I'm just a bit scared about what will happen if the accusations are true." Clay said.

"Do you think they are?" George asked carefully. Clay was hesitant.

"I... I wouldn't be surprised." He said softly, looking down. George shuffled closer to him and let their shoulders press against each other. The small motion made Clay relax. "My father... he's changed a lot since my mother died. He was sort of always like this but she was his buffer I guess."

George nodded, letting Clay speak.

"I'm not worried if he's Mayor or not. I'm more scared of what could happen if the accusations are true and charges are pressed. Me and my sister... I don't know what we'd do."

"I'm sure there's lots of people who would support you. Can you think of anyone?" George asked.

"Yes. But I don't want to put that sort of pressure on anyone either. And I'll be 18 soon, but I don't have a job. One that pays, at least. I don't have time for one either. And I'll be going to college maybe for finance. I just... I don't think I could take care of Drista, let alone myself." Clay said, covering his face with one hand.

George let his forehead fall against Clay's shoulder.

"You don't have to do anything alone."

"I already do." Clay whispered. George shook his head and lifted it.

"No. I know for a fact you have so many people that care for you and would drop anything for you in a heartbeat. You don't have to do anything alone."

The sun had fully set. The last of the colours were slowly melting away as stars started sprinkling the sky. Lights in buildings and houses were starting to switch on, and the streets were growing busier as people went home.

"If everyone else fails you, you have me." George said, and Clay looked at him.

"You mean that?"

"Of course."

"Why? I'm just some random kid you've had to save a few times." Clay said, staring back into the goggles. George smiled slightly. He's said the same thing to Dream before.

"You're more than just a random kid." George practically whispered.

One of Clay's favourite games was guessing if he was looking at G's eyes. And even though he still couldn't tell, he knew he was. So he just remained staring a while, pretending that the boy in front of him was in regular clothes, no goggles, no blue.

Just a boy with deep brown eyes, a beautiful smile and a perfect face.

The boy that first came to mind made Clay have to shake his head to rid the thought. He couldn't let fantasies interfere with reality.

"I should take you home." George cleared his throat, leaning away from Clay before standing up. Clay frowned and looked up at him.

"But I don't want to go, can't I stay with you?" Clay asked. George chuckled and held out a hand, which Clay accepted and allowed himself to be helped up.

"You have places you need to be."

"Do you as well?" Clay asked.

"Sort of." George sighed.

"You're going to be transformed for a while aren't you? Is it to protect George?" Clay asked.

"Yeah. It is. You don't have to worry about him so much, Clay. George is doing ok." George said slightly sadly.

"Well, he's my best friend. It's my job to worry about him." Clay said. George sighed, and looked out once more at the hidden sunset.

"It's my job too." He said. And it felt like a lie.

•

"G." A voice interrupted George's thoughts, and he quickly lifted his head.

He had been lying on a random rooftop, stargazing by himself for a while. He was waiting for a few more hours until he had to go home to see his parents. And then he would sneak out again to continue the plan.

But Dream was now here. Out of nowhere.

"Dream?" George responded, sitting up and leaning against the wall. The green hero cautiously walked forward. "What are you doing? Why are you transformed."

"I could ask you the same thing. I went to check on George but he wasn't home. Is it part of your plan?" He asked.

"Yeah..." George said hesitantly.

"And you can't tell me where he is because not many people should know?" Dream asked with a scoff, kicking a bit of rubble.

"Look, I know you're pissed at me for George knowing my name and me not telling you but-"

"No. I.... I get it." Dream took a deep breath. "It wasn't intentional. And for the record, I'm not upset that George knows. I'm upset you didn't tell me he knew. And... ok, well I guess I'm a little upset that I can't know but I've always been like that."

George stared at him.

"You're not mad at me anymore?" He asked in a soft voice. Dream sighed and walked closer, and sat down in front of him.

"Well, you're still hiding things from me. And it feels like I'm being left out of something with you and L, and George too. And we are supposed to be a team so it stings a little. But I know you're

always trying to do the right thing. And you never intentionally hurt me." Dream said.

George looked down.

"So, no. I'm not mad at you. And it may not be believable, but I think I was more frustrated than angry." He finished.

George wanted to cry. He felt his eyes pricking. Thank god Dream couldn't see. Dream could never see his eyes. Not how sad they were, or how exhausted they were, or even when they were angry, or happy or any emotion. Because he couldn't see them at all.

"Wait. What's wrong? Are you ok?" Dream asked, and George looked up with wide teary eyes hidden by the damned goggles.

*How did he know?*

"I'm so awful to you." George croaked out. "How do you put up with me? Why do you forgive me every time I do something wrong? Why are you here? Why do you know me so well? I don't understand." He started to cry. He wanted to wipe his tears but he couldn't, so he settled for covering his ears.

Dream immediately shuffled forward and grabbed his hands.

"Hey, hey." He said softly. "Take a breath."

"No, I don't understand. I-I am always so mean to you. And I keep rejecting you. And hurting you. But you're here. I don't understand it." He said.

Dream moved so he was sitting next to G instead, and pulled him into a hug, pressing his chin on top of his head.

"It's not intentional. I know you care for me, even if it is in a slightly different way that I care for you. But... that's ok. It's ok." Dream said softly.

"I'm so, so sorry."

"Don't be sorry, G."

"I wish I could tell you who I was. Maybe we could be friends in less stressful situations. But we can't. And I know that it hurts you more than me, and I'm sorry." George said, letting his head press against Dream's chest, knees curled between them.

"It's ok. I'm fine with just this." Dream whispered, pressing gentle lips to the top of the boy's head for a moment, closing his eyes.

"Just this is enough."

## Chapter End Notes

Officially changed the rating to teen and up rather than mature.

I have a question: What do you think the Blade's motives are? Why does he want all



the jewels?

I love hearing all of your theories, they make me so happy :)

# There's too much to do

## Chapter Summary

An attack at the school involving multiple villains puts George and Dream in the middle of a battle with very limited options

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George looked down as dark liquid slowly dripping onto his feet, staining them a deep red. The flow was steady, and he was so mesmerised by the dripping, he hadn't even considered where it was coming from.

"Help!" A voice called, and George looked back up. There was the Blade, right in front of him, holding a boy by his ankle, dangling him over the edge of a building.

George's vision blurred, and he wiped his eyes, pushing blood out of them. It was his head that was bleeding.

"Help me!" The boy called, and George looked back up at him.

It was Clay. Innocent Clay, dangling a hundred feet the air, his dirty blonde hair blowing beneath his head.

"Your Sapphire, George." The Blade said, a hand out with an evil smile.

George's eyes went wide, and he clutched the bright pendent that was against his chest. But he was wearing his super suit.

"I... how did you..." George stammered. How the Blade figure out his name?

"George please do something for once! Do your one fucking job!" Clay yelled, red faced and gritted teeth, still being dangled over the edge.

"You have three seconds George." The Blade laughed. George looked around. He didn't have his bow.

"Come on, *George*. Aren't you going to do something?" A new voice taunted him, and he turned to see Dream, resting against a wall, watching the scene occur.

"Wh-what." George stared at him.

"I can't believe it was you the whole time. How did I ever think I was in love with you?" Dream snorted. "Pity it's just useless fucking George." Dream continued.

George put his hands on his head, not feeling his goggles. He was transformed, but no goggles.

"George! You're fucking useless! You're just going to sit there and let me die? The boy you're in love with?" Clay said, with an angry pout. "I'll forgive you for harassing me and trying to

manipulate me into liking you, if you save my life."

"Clay." George choked back a sob.

"What's it going to be, George? You're Sapphire? Or he dies?"

"But... I... what?" George couldn't even see properly, the blood was covering his face and he wanted to choke.

"Fine. The Mayor's son dies." The Blade said, and let go.

"No!" George screamed, running to the edge. Clay plummeted to the ground, and just before he could jump off after him, Dream grabbed his arm and stopped him.

"Ah, look. You've killed him." Dream laughed.

"No! Please!" George screamed.

"George!" Clay called out to him.

"No! No! Please! Let me go!" George struggled against the grip. He could hear Blade's laughing echoing in his ears, hear Clay's screams for help, and Dream's wheezing in his ear. And he could barely see anything, just blood.

*"George!"*

"No! NO!" George screamed.

*"GEORGE!"*

He sat up abruptly, hitting his head on something in the process. He couldn't breathe, it felt like he was choking on blood.

"Fuck!" A voice said, and through his teary vision, he saw a boy standing in front of him, holding their forehead.

"George. Look at me. You're ok." A calmer voice said, someone else kneeling in front of him.

"Clay." George croaked out, seeing the dirty blonde kneeling in front of him, firmly on the ground, no malice in his eyes, only concern.

"Yes, it's me. It's ok." He said.

George sobbed, and Clay wrapped his arms around him, shushing George as he pulled his head into his chest.

"You were having a nightmare." Clay said softly. "It wasn't real."

"I- you- I almost-"

"It's ok." Clay shushed him, combing his fingers through George's hair. "It wasn't real, I promise."

George tried to take some deep breaths, in time with Clay's inflating chest. The fingers through his hair was calming, and he was slowly calming down.

"I definitely have a bruise." He heard Nick mumble nearby, but George tuned it out.

After a few minutes, George pulled away, wiping his face and Clay let go.

"You ok?" He said, bending slightly so he was at George's eye level.

George looked around, seeing he was outside the school, sitting on the grass.

"Wh-why are we outside?" George said, sitting up more, leaning against the tree.

"Free period." Nick said, continuing scraping words into the tree. "Don't you remember walking outside with us?"

George furrowed his eyebrows.

"You seemed really exhausted so we just let you nap against the tree. But you started like tossing and mumbling and then you were yelling." Clay explained. George swallowed and nodded.

"Right. Uh. Sorry." He said. He vaguely remembered the day. He didn't get any sleep last night. Or the night before. Well, he hasn't really had much sleep for weeks. Months.

"Don't apologise. Are you ok?" Clay said, still kneeling in front of him. George nodded, wincing at the headache he had. Clay reached forward and held the side of his face, immediately making George's eyes go wide and blush.

"You have dirt on your cheek." Clay chuckled, brushing it off. "Hold still." He said, leaning closer to brush it all off. George didn't look at Clay as he did, for fear he would explode.

"There." Clay said, stopping the brushing movement. "All gone." He said.

His touch on his cheek lingered for a moment, and George looked up at him. But the second he did, the hand fell, and Clay shuffled away slightly.

"What was your nightmare about, Gogy?" Nick said. George looked at him, seeing he was still carving into the tree.

"Oh. Uh. Nothing." He said, reaching for his water bottle in his bag.

"You were saying 'No!' and 'Please!' and 'Let me go!'" Nick said, imitating George's accent.

"He doesn't have to talk about it." Clay said gently.

"He doesn't talk much to me about anything anymore." Nick muttered. But it went unheard by both boys.

"It's fine. I... uh... got caught by a villain." George said, then took a large sip of his drink. "Not a big deal."

"Do you get nightmares often?" Clay asked.

George looked at him.

"Not often. Like. Once every few days?" George said. Clay narrowed his eyes.

"And how often do you get to sleep?" He asked quietly. George pursed his lips, taking another sip before answering.

"Once every few days." He mumbled. Would he count that as good sleep? They were barely naps.

"Oh shit!" Nick yelled, jumping to his feet and checking his phone. "The bio assignment was due today." He said.

"Yes, Nick! What the hell." George said. Nick pulled at his hair.

"I need to print it and give it to Mr Peterson right?" He said.

"Yes. It's due before the end of last period. Go do it now dumbass." George scolded him. Nick nodded, and grabbed his bag and started sprinting back into the school.

George chuckled and shook his head.

"I'm surprised he even finished it." George said, making Clay laugh too.

"I nearly forgot it was due today too. Feels like we got that assignment ages ago." Clay said, and George hummed.

"Can I ask you something?" Clay said.

A loud explosion came from the school, and both teenagers immediately spun around to look at it. They could hear the alarm blearing from here.

"Shit." They both said, jumping to their feet.

"Come on, let's go!" Clay grabbed George's arm and starting pulling him away from the building, towards the fence.

"It's probably a villain. You need to hide." Clay said. George bit his lip. *No, I need to transform.*

"Um. Dream and GNotFound have a spot for me to hide if there's villains." George said, as Clay stopped to size up the fence.

"Great. You go there, I'm guessing it's confidential or something. I'm going to go hide somewhere else." Clay said, deciding the fence was short enough to get over.

"I'm sorry, Clay." George felt guilty he was leaving him. He was cut off by another loud crash from the school.

"No, it's completely fine." Clay said, and then helped George over the fence and then climbed over himself so they were outside the school grounds.

"Where do you need to be, George? I'll take you there if you want." Clay asked.

"I'm fine. I'll call you, ok? I'm so sorry I'm leaving you." George said, feeling insanely guilty, but he had no other option, he needed to get away from Clay and transform.

"Don't apologise. I want you to be safe. Don't worry about me. Go." He said, giving George a gentle nudge. The boy nodded and then ran down the street. Clay watched him, and then turned and ran down a separate one.

He wasn't even sure it was a villain yet. So George could be safe, but he wasn't taking any chances. Another explosion sounded was the school.

He transformed nearby and ran back to the school. The crashes were echoing around the streets, and Clay could hear yelling.

He could see part of the school was crumbling, and students were evacuating to the school field or running out of the school. Clay sprinted to the front of the building where students were piling out.

"It's Dream!" He heard his name be called.

"What's happening?" He asked, stopping some random teenagers.

"There's multiple villains. One made explosions." A girl said.

"And another shoots this purple goo, making people not able to move anywhere!" Another girl said.

"There's another!" A boy pointed. Clay turned and saw a flying figure above the school. They used their hands, and pointing around the school.

Massive, glittery see-through barriers rose on the streets surrounding the school, blocking it in a cube. Clay watched as students reached it and tried to get through, but couldn't.

If they couldn't get out... could GNotFound get in?

"Dreeeeeam." He heard his name be called, and looked up at the top of the school.

*Another* villain was standing on top, looking down at him with a wave. "Where is he?" The villain taunted.

That's four villains.

Was there more?

"Everyone listen to me!" Clay yelled at the students in the nearest vicinity. "Everyone take cover where you can. I know we are trapped inside the box but you need to hide. Don't go into the school." He said, seeing the top left corner of the school was crumbling.

He ran inside. He needed to get everyone who was in, out.

Students were still running past, some of them with minor injuries, a few limping.

"Out, get out!" Clay tried to get them to hurry up. He ran up the stairs to get to the part of the school that was exploded.

There were multiple students still in the hall, as the ceiling crumbled. He could see some where injured, and some unconscious.

Clay stopped for a moment, staring at the scene in horror. He couldn't do this. How could he save everyone? There were four villains, twice the amount he has ever faced at once, and GNotFound wasn't here yet.

He ran forward, helping a few of the students to their feet.

"If you can walk, you need to get out now." Clay said. One girl with a bleeding head nodded, and helped her friend limp back towards the stairs. Clay then ran to an unconscious boy and winced as he swung him over his shoulder. He swung another girl over his other shoulder, and then picked up one more with both arms.

Since the building was crumbling, there was an opening in the walls where he could see the outside. So he ran and jumped out of it, landing on the ground outside by some students.

He gently placed the unconscious teenagers on the ground and ordered the nearest kids to move them further away from the school.

There was another explosion, and screams from nearby echoed.

"Dream!" His name was called, and looked back at where he jumped from to see GNotFound, also holding some injured kids, and he jumped down too.

"G, how did you get in?" Clay asked, as the hero put the teens on the ground as well.

"I got in just before it closed. And that's all the kids from that explosion. We need to find where the next one was." G said, running back to the building. Clay followed.

"G, there's four villains." Clay said, and the blue hero turned to him.

"Four? Are you kiddi-" He was cut off, but a force hitting his chest and knocking him backwards onto the ground.

A sticky purple substance coated his chest, and stuck to the ground.

Clay looked up to see a villain in purple smile with a gun, now aiming it at him. He dodged the shot, and pulled out his sword.

"Make this easy, Dream. No one else has to get hurt. You have two options. Give me your jewel, or tell me where George Davidson is." The villain taunted, shooting at him again.

"Fuck fuck fuck." He heard G say, and could only spare a glance at him, seeing him still on the ground, writhing under the hardening substance.

"What is this shit?" Clay said, dodging another shot of the purple goo. It went past him and hit a student in the distance.

There was another explosion.

This was too much. They couldn't do it. There were too many people hurt they needed to protect. Too many villains to fight. No where to run and hide. No Liberator. No Sapnap.

What were they going to do?

Clay glanced around for a moment, before throwing his sword at the purple villain, it digging into their arm. They yelled and dropped the gun, and Clay jumped forward, knocking them to the ground, pulling out his sword and grabbing the gun.

The villain shoved him off and flipped them over, hand going to his jewel.

"Dream!" A shout, and the villain on top was knocked off by G, who had somehow got up. G yanked him to his feet and pulled him away, basically dragging him into the school.

"How did you get up?" Clay asked, out of breath.

"The substance hardened and I used an arrow to smash it. Dream what are we going to do?" G said, putting his hands on his head.

"Ok. It's ok. We just... we just gotta fight one at a time. We need to find the explosions one first. That's causing the most damage. Then the purple villain again. There's one on the roof that waved at me, I don't know what his power is or what he is doing. And also the villain who made the

barriers. I don't know if there is more." Clay said.

"What does the explosions villain look like?"

"I haven't seen the explosions." He said, and at the same time, a loud one occurred nearby, followed by yells. They both ran through the school towards it, and found the cafeteria. They couldn't see anyone though.

"Help!" A voice said, and they both turned to see none other than Tubbo in the corner, holding an unconscious Ranboo in his lap. The two heroes sprinted over.

"Is he ok?" George asked, as Dream took the lanky boy out of Tubbo's grip and stood up. George helped Tubbo to his feet, and saw he had an injured leg.

"I don't know. We were hiding and trying to find one of our friends but there was an explosion." Tubbo said. George put an arm around Tubbo to help him limp as they followed after Dream and Ranboo to the nearest exit.

"Was there anyone else nearby?"

"No. We couldn't see anyone. If you find our friend can you help him find us? His name is Tommy. You saved him at the theme park, he's blonde and loud." Tubbo said.

"Yes. Where did you last see him?"

"He got a phone call and left to the bathroom to take it. But then we were attacked and we don't know where he is."

"Maybe he got out?" Dream said, placing Ranboo down on the ground outside, and Tubbo limped to his side.

"Did you see who made the explosion?" George asked. Tubbo nodded.

"A villain in all dark grey. They throw these ball things and they explode. They went towards the gym I think."

"Thank you." George said, turning and getting Dream to follow him inside again.

"I think most of the students are out. We should find the explosions villain first and then check the school." George said, and Dream nodded as they ran to the gym.

George slammed open the doors, and the villain was there, head to toe in shiny dark grey leather, a visor over their eyes, and holding two sizzling balls.

"There you are." He said.

"Put them away. You don't have to do this. Stop terrorising the school, you've hurt so many kids." George pleaded. The villain scoffed.

"Do you think I care about that?"

"Please stop. You don't have to listen to the Blade." Dream begged.

"You have two options. Either tell me where George Davidson is, or give me your jewels and I can stop. We can all leave and no more innocents have to get hurt." The villain said.



"We... we can't do that." George said, swallowing.

"We won't do that." Dream reiterated.

"Fine." The villain grinned, and then threw both the bombs at the heroes.

George jumped onto Dream. "Shield!" He yelled, the blue sphere enclosing them the second the bombs erupted.

The heroes fell over from George throwing himself over Dream. Through the blue hazy walls, it looked like the world was falling apart. Debris and dust prevented them from seeing anything for a moment.

"Fuck." George said, pushing off Dream's chest and standing up in the shield.

"G..." Dream said, voice wavering. "You only have ten minutes now." He said slowly.

"I fucking know! Oh my god, what do we do? It would take me at least half an hour to recharge. There's no way we can defeat four villains in ten minutes. Plus I'll need to find somewhere safe to recharge. And what are you going to do in that time? You can fight them but you can't hold them off! There's kids everywhere who are hurt and if we don't do something soon, some of them could die! We can't run anywhere. But we can't give them our jewels! Or give them George." He ranted. *We could give them George. Maybe that's the only option.*

Dream stood up and put his hands on George's shoulders.

"Look at my eyes. Take a breath. We will figure it out. We always do." He said calmly.

George stared at his partner, taking a deep breath. Dream was always good at calming him down. The hands on his shoulders were comforting.

"The villain on the roof. What did they do?" George said, taking a deep breath. Dream dropped his hands.

"Nothing. Just waved at me."

"We should figure out what they do." George said, just as the shield flickered.

"But our priority should be the barriers villain, right? If we can at least take their jewel, then the barriers will come down and kids can leave and get treated." Dream said.

"Ok, good point. They can fly, we should go go there roof and get them to come to us." George nodded along.

"Good idea, but the villain that waved at me was up there before." Dream said.

"Great. We can figure out what their power is and take them down too."

The shield disappeared, and bits of rubble fell on them. But they jumped over the debris and made their way out of the school.

Students were scattered everywhere, particularly on the school field. The explosions villain wasn't seen anywhere. They must still be in the building, flushing out all the kids. The purple villain was also missing. The barrier villain was flying around all the students, but not doing anything, just looking. Probably trying to find George. They needed to draw them closer to defeat them, since

neither Dream nor George could fly.

On the other side of the barriers were emergency vehicles and bystanders and reporters. But no one could get through.

"The heroes survived." The villain on the roof yelled, and they both turned to look at them.

"Come on." George said, gesturing for Dream to follow him up as they jumped onto the roof.

The villain just stood there, watching them, arms crossed against his chest.

The villain were dressed in red and white, his mouth and lower half of their face covered by a red mask. He had bright blonde hair, sticking up like gravity didn't affect it. He had no weapon that they could see. But a pendent around his neck, shining with a bright red jewel.

"Big D. Big G." The villain said, an amused look in his bright blue eyes.

"The pendent." George said, making an arrow appear in his bow. Dream nodded as he held up the sword. The villain held up his hands.

"Woah, hold up. I haven't even done anything." He said, still with a smile.

"What's your power then?" Dream said.

"Dream, we don't have time to chat. Go." George said, just as his pendent flashed and buzzed twice. Five minutes. He shot an arrow that the villain dodged. Dream sprinted forward, waving his sword.

The villain dodged his hit, and Dream kept swinging. George shot multiple arrows, but the villain was dodging all of them.

Another explosion went off.

"I wouldn't waste your time fighting me. There's a crumbling building and hundreds of teenagers hurt." The villain laughed as he dodged.

"Then what is your power? What are you doing." Dream almost hit him, but missed.

"Nothing." The villain shrugged.

George yelled in frustration, looking down at all the civilians watching in anticipation.

"This is fucking hopeless!" George yelled, and Dream shook his head, running to his side.

"No. It's not. It's fine." He said calmly.

"Look, all of this can end of you just either tell me where George is. Because he was last seen at the school but is missing. So you hid him somewhere, and it must be somewhere in this fucking box." The villain pointed to the glittery clear wall in the distance. "Either you tell me where he is, or just give me your jewels. But I know you won't just give up." He teased.

"I'm at my fucking limit. Leave this city alone! Leave us alone!" George yelled.

"Just give me George or your Sapphire, GNotFound. It's an easy decision."

*Maybe it really is the only option.*

"Fuck you!" Dream yelled, charging once again, waving his sword.

"Project!" He shouted, a second him appearing. Both of them circled the villain, as George shot arrow after arrow.

The villain dodged the arrows, but got confused at which Dream was the real one with the real sword. And he had no weapon to protect himself either.

Dream stabbed the sword into the villain's stomach, and pulled back. The villain yelled and dropped to his knees, hands over his bleeding stomach.

"Dream! No fatal hits!" George gasped. "That's just a civilian being controlled. You know this."

"He's fine." Dream said, swallowing and looking at the red and white villain.

"His pendent! Get it!" George then yelled, running forward.

Dream reached forward to grab the pendent, but something came out of nowhere and sliced his arm. Dream pulled back with a yell, stumbling a few feet away, his forearm had a large gash with blood pouring out of it.

A trident was now on the roof.

Dream and George both looked up to see the Blade, standing on the edge of the roof now with anger in his eyes.

George saw his eyes dart to the red and white villain who was still clutching his stomach.

George's eyes went wide and he ran forward too, hand outstretched for the villain's pendent.

But the Blade was quicker, and jumped in front of the red villain, pulling his trident out of the ground and pointing it at both the heroes in front of him.

George's pendent started rapidly flashing and buzzing and the Blade looked back at it, with eager eyes.

But George saw an emotion flash in his eyes. The Blade looked almost conflicted. He looked between George's pendent, and then back down at the bleeding villain.

"Please stop this, Blade." George pleaded, referring to the entire mess that had been created at the school. The Blade looked back at him with a furious glare through the boar mask.

The red and white villain behind Blade coughed, and keeled over, blood spitting out of his mouth, which made Blade look down.

George noticed his jaw tense, before he looked back up.

"I will find George. And I will get your name one way or another, GNotFound." The Blade said, and looked at Dream. "And I'll get your ring in exchange for his life."

Dream held back an anger-fuelled remark.

The Blade then made a sound of frustration before clenching a fist.

At the same time, George saw the wall surrounding the building disappear. He saw the villain that caused it turn and fly away.

The Blade strapped the trident to his back and then swiftly picked up the red and white villain with his two free hands.

George also had to go. He needed to go now. His pendent was flashing brighter.

But he kept his eyes on the Blade and the villain he was holding. He saw the red and white villain cough blood once more and close his eyes.

But the thing that caught George's attention was the red pendent.

It flashed twice.

The Blade jumped off the building onto the nearest one while still holding the villain.

George and Dream didn't have time to fight or chase him. George had seconds and Dream only had minutes. But they ran to the side of the building, to watch him go. The Blade ran along multiple buildings, before disappearing from sight.

They looked down at the school, and the emergency vehicles finally got in, since the barrier had vanished.

The purple villain and explosion villain were nowhere to be seen either.

*What the fuck just happened.*

"Fuck." George said, his jewel buzzing erratically, and he didn't even have time to say anything to Dream, as he sprinted to a part of the roof that had a massive hole in it from an explosion, and jumped down into the building.

He ran into a slightly destroyed classroom, and the second he did, he detransformed.

Dream however, was still on top the building, and jumped down to the ground.

"Was that the Blade!" Reporters practically yelled at him. Clay ignored them, running to help teenagers to the paramedics. He also went with police into the building to check for any more kids. But he only had a few spare minutes to help.

His arm was healing in his last few minutes, but he had to transform back soon. There were a lot more students than he thought still inside, stuck from the purple villain. He used his sword to break the hardened substance, freeing them. But he had to go, leaving the scene to detransform somewhere away from the school

He was exhausted, but took a deep breath and ran back to the school as Clay. He needed to check on his sister and all his friends. He also checked his phone but saw no messages from George. But he knew the villains didn't get him, so he wasn't too worried.

*What the fuck just happened.*

He ran over to the large crowd of students that were relatively unhurt. The most seriously injured ones were already on their way to the hospital, but the paramedics were going to check every student.

"Clay!" He heard Nick's voice, and turned to see his friend barrelling towards him, and enveloping him in a hug.

"Are you ok?" Clay asked, looking over Nick, and was relieved to see he didn't have any injuries,

just a few cuts and scrapes.

"I'm fine. I got caught in the purple goo and literally couldn't move. But some firefighter got me out a few minutes ago. Where's George?"

"He's ok. He's hiding out somewhere the heroes organised." Clay said, and Nick sighed in relief.

"He wasn't replying to me and I was terrified."

"Have you seen Drista by any chance?" Clay then asked, but Nick shook his head. Clay pushed away the sick feeling in his stomach. "Where is everyone else? Are they ok?" Clay asked, as Nick lead him back to his friends.

"Our group is almost all fine." He said with a wince. "Except Ranboo. And Tubbo. They were in an explosion. Ranboo was unconscious but he woke up a little before the walls disappeared. Tubbo really hurt his leg, but they are both going to the hospital now." Nick said.

Everyone in the friend group greeted Clay by asking if he was ok and checking if George was too.

"Where's Tommy?" Clay asked.

"We don't know. It's why Tubbo and Ranboo were still in the school. They were looking for him. But no one has seen him." Nick said.

"Nick!" A voice called, and the brunette turned immediately to the sound.

Karl was jogging over, and Nick met him halfway with a hug.

"Karl! You ok?" Quackity said. Karl nodded, letting go of Nick to turn to face him, but was still holding onto Nick's arm. The boy in question looked down at the hand and smiled. Nick grabbed Karl's hand instead, and started swinging it between them as Karl spoke to a few people.

"I'm fine. Guys, come over here!" Karl called behind him. Wilbur and Niki jogged over, and they also seemed relatively ok.

Wilbur's eyes scanned the group, rushed.

"Where's Tommy?" He asked, not even able to find Tubbo and growing worried.

"We don't know, I'm sorry." Darryl said. "Tubbo and Ranboo are going to the hospital. They tried to find him."

"Shit." Wilbur said, pulling out his phone. He tried calling someone, Clay guessed Tommy, but no one picked up.

"I'm sure he's ok." Niki comforted him.

Clay pulled out his own phone again to call his sister.

"Oh thank God." A new voice arrived, and Clay stopped to look up. It was George, who was jogging over. Nick was first to run to him, letting go of Karl to engulf the brunet in a hug, but George pulled away first to check on his friend's injuries.

"No one's hurt?" George asked.

"George! You ok?" Clay asked, also running over, and George checked him too, his eyes falling on

Clay's forearm, where a thin scratch was still lightly bleeding. It had mostly healed from the trident, but not completely.

"Yeah. Of course I'm fine." George said, and Clay sighed as he hugged him. "Clay, I'm so sorry I had to leave."

"George, seriously, stop. I would have been angry if you *didn't* go to hide."

"I'm sorry you couldn't come."

"Please stop apologising. I'm fine." Clay said with a chuckle to show he wasn't mad.

"I'm glad." George said, but bit his lip as he looked at the small slice Clay had.

"Have you by any chance seen Drista?" Clay asked, and George nodded, meeting his eyes.

"Yes. Yes, I found Lexi and Drista was there too. She's fine, Clay." George said, at the same moment Clay got a phone call from her. He picked up instantly.

"Clay please tell me you aren't calling from a hospital." Drista said immediately.

"I'm fine. I'm out the front of the school with my friends. Are you ok? Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine." Drista said, sighing in relief that her brother was ok.

"Phil?" Wilbur's voice grabbed George's attention purely because of the name he said. He turned to see that the boy was on the phone, a worried expression on his face. "Yes, yes, I'm fine. Have you heard from Tommy?"

George hated eavesdropping, but it was unavoidable.

"Fuck." Wilbur said, a hand grabbing a fistful of his hair as he listened to the phone call. "Ok. Ok. Where's Tech? Ok.... Fuck.... Bye Phil." He said the goodbye much softer than the rest and turned off his phone. He looked extremely upset.

Clay had finished his call now too, and was looking at Wilbur with concern as well.

"Wilbur? Is everything ok?" George asked carefully. Wilbur shook his head and his stomach dropped.

"Tommy's in the hospital. Phil said I can't go because the hospital is already over capacity. Said once I get checked by paramedics I have to go home. Apparently Techno will pick me up."

"Oh shit." Nick said.

"God, I hope he's ok." Clay said, with wide eyes.

"Let us know how he is when you find out." George said, and Wilbur nodded.

George had plans to organise a meeting with Phil and Dream. But decided it can wait. Phil needed to be with his kids.

George took a deep shaky breath.

So many teenagers got hurt. He should have done more. And they didn't get a single jewel of all four of the villains, or the Blade. They all escaped. And what do George and Dream have to show

for it? Hundreds of injured teenagers.

He was starting to doubt the reason for all the fighting. If they had given up their jewels, then no one would get hurt.

But why does Blade want them so bad? It cannot be for good. It cannot be better than all the destruction he's already caused just to obtain them.

If George had given up himself, it would have been ended too. And then maybe he'd get hurt, but he wouldn't say GNotFound's name unless he was forced by Blade's power. And even then, Blade still wouldn't have Dream's ring.

So if he had given up himself, the city would at least still have one hero, and a lot less injured children.

But Dream has expressed on multiple occasions he would give up his ring for George. George chewed on his lip as he thought. He needed to change that. He couldn't let Dream destroy the city just for his life.

He felt someone grab his hand, and turned to see Clay, who gave him a small smile.

"Stop, I can see your mind buzzing from over here. I know what you're thinking, George." Clay said softly. George glanced down at their hands, that Clay intertwined. He pulled George closer to his side.

"Huh?" George said, slightly flustered.

"I know you're thinking this is your fault. Like if you turned yourself to the Blade, people wouldn't have gotten hurt." Clay said.

George stared at him. *How did he know.*

"Well, I want to remind you that that is stupid thinking. Because turning yourself in means you get hurt. You know you're just as important as everyone else, right?" Clay said.

"But... so many people got hurt."

"Yeah. This is a war, George. But everyone knows you can't give the bad guys what they want. There's a reason Blade is doing everything he can for the jewels. You giving up is just giving him what he wants, and that's how wars are lost. And how *more* people will end up getting hurt."

"I feel like everyone's blood is on my hands." George mumbled.

"No." Clay said, pulling George's hands to his lips and speaking into the knuckles. "Their blood is on Blade's. Don't lose sight of who is doing this."

"But I could have stopped it." He said. Could he?

"I don't care. I'm not letting you get hurt. I can't afford you to get hurt." Clay said, and George looked away.

"Why?"

"What the fuck do you mean *why*? George, I love you. You're... you're my best friend." Clay said. "I don't know why I'd do without you."

George couldn't help but blush at the words. He was somehow told he was loved and friend zoned all in the same sentence. *Yeah, sounds like Clay.*

"I... fuck, George. You're everything to me." Clay said earnestly, his eyes showing no falter of humour or doubt.

George hated how genuine it sounded.

## Chapter End Notes

If you thought I had made things tough for George so far, well, it only gets worse from here. I kinda feel bad.

And four villains, hm? How can the Blade do that?



# Everything is my fault

## Chapter Summary

Two weeks since the attack of four villains, and George has barely been his civilian self. After a fight with a friend, a Code Red was the last thing he wanted.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Although our heroes, nor the Mayor have not confirmed that the Blade is the mastermind behind all the villain attacks over the past year, his recent sighting on top of Pandora High at the biggest villain attack ever two weeks ago has started many theories and rumours. The Blade was last seen over three years ago on Doomsday, where the Liberator fought and defeated him. While neither have been sighted or caught on camera until this attack, the new evidence that the Blade is still alive has sparked a number of questions. Why haven't we seen him until now? Has he been behind the villain attacks? What does he want? Did the Liberator survive too? And did our two superheroes Dream and GNotFound know of Blade's existence?"

George stared at the news he brought up on his phone while he sat with his back against a random rooftop door on a random apartment in the city. As GNotFound, of course.

"And if the heroes did in fact know that he was still alive and a part of the villain attacks, why have they not warned the city? Can we even trust our beloved heroes and Mayor anymore? We are yet to here confirmation from the heroes themselves about what happened."

George swore under his breath. He almost wanted to go to the news lady right now and tell the city what's going on.

"The attack at Pandora High two weeks ago saw the sighting of four villains, and the Blade. There were no fatalities, but 83 students and five teachers were rushed to the hospital with severe injuries, and over four hundred were injured and treated onsite or at a later time. The paramedics and police were initially not able to enter the school area as a villain created barriers, leaving injured students just out of reach. The barriers finally came down at the same time the Blade left the site."

Footage of the Blade jumping off the building carrying the red and white villain showed on screen.

"GNotFound and Dream appeared to have a conversation with the Blade, but there was little fighting, and not a single villain was properly defeated. Whatever they said must have ended the Blade's orders to the other villains, as all attacks ceased and they disappeared. The city is thankful for the heroes quick thinking, and that they put the injured students ahead of fighting the villains. Even though it was only a temporary fix."

George switched off his phone and grabbed his head. They didn't talk the Blade out of it. He just left, for no apparent reason. George had no answers as to why. Except that he took the injured villain with him, and seemed slightly concerned for him.

Him and Dream never deliver fatal wounds. They know the villains are just citizens, under control of the Blade. They do have to give some hits, but never ones that could kill, since they take off the

jewels and the villains can no longer heal. Dream shouldn't have struck him in the stomach with his sword.

But since the villain was taken away before they could take his jewel, George was slightly relieved that he could heal since it was a bad wound.

Even though he swore he saw the jewel *flash twice*...

The only jewels that have countdowns are the four precious ones. Emerald, Sapphire, Diamond and Ruby. Dream has the Emerald, he has the Sapphire, Sapnap has the Diamond, and Blade has the Ruby. So they were the only villains and heroes that have countdowns after using their power once.

Well, that's what he thought. Since no villains they have ever fought have ever had a countdown or a limit to their powers. But this red and white villain didn't even seem to even *use* a power. And the pendant flashed twice.

But maybe it was the sunlight. Maybe it didn't actually flash.

George was currently transformed and sitting on a random building, as he had done for the entire two weeks since the attack at the school. It was late afternoon, the sun near the horizon.

He got a message on his phone from the group chat, and sighed before checking it. It was from Skeppy.

### **Skeppy**

swim at mine tonihgt, anytme from now :p

The group has organised something each day since school had been cancelled for the whole two weeks for repairs. While most students were celebrating, George hated it.

Because now he had nothing to do. The rule Phil and him set was that he was GNotFound, except for school and dinner with family. And with school out of the mix, he was incredibly bored for too many hours of the day. He technically shouldn't use his phone, but what else was he supposed to do?

He spent most of his time thinking. About how the Blade created four villains, why he let them go of his power. Why he took that one villain with him. And what power did that red and white villain have.

And when was he going to attack next.

The Blade had been silent for the entire fortnight, and George had no clue why. He has no clue why the Blade left the fight either, especially since George was going to change back soon. So many unanswered questions and all of George's time was consumed with coming up with answers.

He hadn't thought once about his upcoming exams or assessment or even prom, which was now a week away. His only thoughts have been about the villains and the jewels and the Blade. It's killing him.

Similarly, the Mayor hasn't called them for a meeting the whole time as well. This was also making George nervous.

Tommy was better now though. He was at the hospital for a really bad wound in his stomach. Tubbo was too, but he got a cast and crutches for a broken leg and was good to go after a day. Ranboo was fine as well, a concussion though, since the explosion made him hit his head and pass out.

But Tommy apparently had lost a lot of blood. He was fine now, all bandaged up and recovering at home. But it was a bit of a scare.

Phil had messaged George saying that they should have a meeting to discuss things. Most likely about the fight with the four villains. But they were waiting for Tommy to recover more.

**Tomathy**

not allowed to swim but i'll come.

**Tubso**

also can't swim because of the cast but i can come too! :D

**Tomathy**

if only we had some friends who were old enough for their license to drive us

**Darryl**

I can pick you two up >\_<

Despite the group organising something almost everyday, George has not gone to a single one. And today was no different. Apart from the group chat messages, he had also received several private ones from Nick and Clay, both begging to see him. George replied very dry, with lame excuses.

**George**

sorry, I'm busy tonight

His usual text. And as predicted, he got a private message from Nick enquiring why. And his phone began to ring. He was always cautious u answering his phone while transformed, but he was alone on a rooftop so gave in.

But he detransformed first. Just in case there was differences in his voice and GNotFound's, but he was yet to figure that out.

"George why aren't you coming?" Nick said. George sighed.

"I have... to drive Lexi to swimming." He said.

"You're lying. She doesn't have swimming lessons today. I know because you always complain on Wednesdays that you have to drive her."

"I complain on Wednesdays because Wednesdays suck. Nothing good ever happens on Wednesdays." George scoffed.

"Everything good happens on Wednesdays. Wednesday is the best day of the week."

"Whatever. I have to help Mom with dinner anyways." He lied. He couldn't cook a meal even if he tried.

"Stop making excuses. Why haven't you hung out with us for two weeks? Is it about the villains?" Nick asked. George chewed on his lip.

"Yeah. I just don't want a villain attack to happen while I'm with you guys again. You already almost died because of me as at the theme park. And again at school. Tubbo has a broken leg and Tommy almost died because of me." He said, realising it was all completely true.

"That was not your fault. It was the Blade's." Nick said. "Come to my house right now. We can hang out without everyone if you want."

"Right now? No, I can't."

"Well then I'm coming over to yours."

"Nick, I'm exhausted." George sighed. He was.

"I don't care. I have theorising to do and I have a whiteboard and everything. Pleeeease come over. We can talk! I feel like we haven't spoken in ages. And there's something I've actually been meaning to talk about." Nick said, voice going from loud and excitable to more serious at the end.

George winced. He felt so guilty.

Maybe a few hours wouldn't hurt. The Blade hasn't done anything in two weeks anyways. George wasted his time for nothing, surely he can have a break.

"Ok. Fine. I'll be there in a few."

"Epic. I'll whip out my whiteboard markers." Nick said and hung up. George chuckled slightly. Nick draws on his whiteboard like he's a detective in a crime show.

George pocketed his phone and stood up, stretching his back.

This will be a good break.

•

But, of course, he's managed to mess this up too.

"In conclusion, I think the Blade being quiet this past two weeks is to do with the villain on the roof, the one the cameras caught him carrying away." Nick announced, using his ruler to point to the blurry picture of the red and white villain on the wall.

George wasn't listening. He didn't even recall actually getting to his house. He had an elbow propped up on Nick's desk, slumped in the seat, eyes glazed over.

"Are you even listening?" Nick sighed.

George didn't respond.

"I'm going to eat your cat."

Nothing.

"Clay died the other day."

Nada.

"I think I like Karl."

No response.

Nick threw his hands in the air, and then scoffed and chucked the ruler at the desk. The sound made George jump up, and turn to Nick.

"You never listen to me George." Nick said. At first, George thought it may have just been one of his usual not serious comments, but the look on his face made George realise he messed up.

"I'm sorry. I have a lot on my mind. What were you saying? About what the heroes must have said to stop the Blade?" George asked. Nick crossed his arms over his chest.

"I spoke about that like ten minutes ago!"

"Nick, I'm sorry." George said, wiping his face. The bags under his eyes were the darkest they had ever been. "I'm just not with it today."

"It's not just today. I feel like we haven't had an actual conversation that you've been mentally present in for weeks. Months almost. Every time I try to bring up something, I give up." Nick said, kicking a shoe on the floor. "Something important to me, that keeps getting interrupted when I try to talk to you."

George's mouth opened slightly in shock, but he quickly closed it.

"I'm so sorry. I really am. I never meant to invalidate you. Have you had something you want to talk about?" George asked, hating how much his chest hurt.

He can't lose Nick too.

"I don't want to now. I'm worked up and that's not going to be the conversation that I want it to be." Nick said, sitting down on his bed with a tense jaw. George sat up straighter, watching his friend.

"Can I fix it? I'll make it up to you." George pleaded.

"Not right now. I'm just pissed. And I don't want to talk because that'll start a fight and I might hurt you." Nick sighed. "Look, can we catch up another time? It's clear you don't want to hang out anyways, and I want some time too cool off."

"I do want to hang out, I swear-"

"You've been blowing off everyone for the last two weeks. No one has seen you. You don't even text often, if you do, it's dry responses." Nick said, not looking at George.

"I'm sorry, Nick. I just haven't been myself-" George was on the verge of tears.

"It's ok, George." Nick sighed. "Just... I can't do this now. Can you leave? I don't hate you, don't panic, I think I just don't want to hang out now." Nick said.

George's lip trembled unintentionally.

"No. Please, let me fix it." George pleaded. "You said you've had something to tell me."

"Not now, George." Nick sighed.

There was a loud ding that echoed in the room, and George felt his heart start beating faster than it already was.

## **CODE RED**

### **Attack at Lore street**

George paled, his grip tightening on his phone. Nick snapped his head up too when he read the message.

"That's your-"

George didn't time to hear the rest or respond, he sprinted out of the room and out of the house. He heard Nick call his name once but he couldn't afford to feel guilty about ignoring him this time. It was his street.

He quickly ducked in an alley and transformed, jumping onto the rooftop and running towards his home.

He reached his street and felt his heart stop. Everyone in every house was out on the street, all looking towards a particular house.

His house.

He sprinted past everyone, reaching his house, and he heard a scream from inside. Without hesitating, he slammed open the door and ran inside.

In the living room stood a purple villain. Not just any purple villain, the one that was at the school. The one with the contraption that shot the sticky purple stuff.

Behind the villain, George saw his Mom, who was against the wall, purple pinning her arms and legs. And on the floor in front of the villain, Lexi was unconscious.

*The Blade had found out where he lived and who his family was.*

"Where is George!" The villain yelled at George, who had snapped his bow the second he entered.

"Obviously not here. Leave this family alone, they've done nothing." George said, his voice breaking slightly.

"I'm not leaving until I have George Davidson."

"What do you want with my son." Lorna asked. The villain turned to her and shot more substance, covering her mouth.

George tensed his jaw and fought the urge to run to her.

He summoned an arrow and shot it at the villain, who was quick to dodge. He turned to stare at George, and then started shooting purple stuff everywhere, at him and around the room. It caused

some things to smash and break. George was dodging as best he could.

When he could, he quickly ran to Lexi's side, and relaxed slightly when he realised she was breathing.

He barely dodged a shot of the purple substance, leaping away from Lexi.

He dodged again. And again.

"George isn't in this house. Where is he!" The villain yelled.

"He's hiding out elsewhere." George said back, shooting another arrow.

"Take me to him or I kill the girl." The villain said, pointing down at Lexi, a foot raised above her head. George lowered his bow immediately, his heart stopping.

"Ok! I will. Please. Stop. She's innocent." George said, eyes on the foot.

He was distracted, and the villain shot goo at him, pushing him back and pinning his stomach against the wall. Before he could raised his bow, the villain shot at both his arms, trapping them as well. He stepped away from Lexi and walked over to George with a smirk.

"I don't even need George." The villain cackled, eyes falling to the pendent. He reached out and George lifted a foot and kicked him away.

The villain shot purple at his feet as well, a furious expression falling over his eyes. He reached forward again and grabbed the pendent.

"Shield!" George yelled, and the villain was flown backwards. The shield only surrounded George, he realised in horror. And the villain quickly went to Lexi again, picking her up. George struggled against the goo, but couldn't move.

The villain smirked, looking at George and then down at Lexi.

George dropped the shield immediately with a repressed sob.

"Don't hurt her." He said, swallowing.

"Don't test me again, GNotFound." The villain said, dropping Lexi and walking over to George again who had accepted his fate. He closed his eyes.

Cold hands touched the pendent on his chest.

"No!" A shout, and a click. The villain was pulled away from George and he opened his eyes to see Dream, who had pinned the villain the floor, his sword to his neck. The pendent was still safely against George's chest.

"Where is George." Dream spat in the villains face.

"He's safe. Take the jewel." George choked out, staring at Lexi. He glanced over at his Mom who was watching with teary eyes, still unable to talk.

Dream smashed the head of the villain against the floor. George could see how mad he was. The sword was brought to his arm.

"Dream! Stop!" He yelled. "No fatal hits. They can't heal when you take the jewel. Why do you

keep forgetting that." He said. Dream gritted his teeth, before taking a deep breath and grabbing the purple pendent instead, pulling it off.

The villain detransformed, but the purple goo stayed. George let his head fall against the wall in relief that it was over. Even though he was still trapped.

Dream got up, immediately running to George and using the sword to cut through the hardened purple substance.

George shoved past him and ran to Lexi, pulling her head into his lap. Dream went to Lorna and cut her free as well, and she ran to Lexi's side as well.

"What happened?" George asked, letting his Mom hold Lexi instead.

"The villain broke in, demanding for my son. Lexi has a mouth on her and started cussing him out. He shoved her and she fell and hit her head." She said, checking the back of Lexi's head for blood. It wasn't bleeding.

"I'll run her to the hospital." George said, standing up. "It'll be faster."

Lorna looked up.

"You used your shield, you'll transform back soon. It's fine. We can wait for the ambulance." She said, and the sirens were approaching.

"I insist." George said. He felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to Dream.

"I'll handle this. You go." He said softly. George shook his head. He was more useful as G, he didn't want to transform back. George just caused problems. Being George means that villains attack his family. Being George means that people get hurt.

This was all his fault.

"Lorna!" A man's shout, and Mark came running into the room. He saw his unconscious daughter and distraught wife and immediately enveloped them in a hug.

"What happened? Is Lex ok? Where's George?" He asked, not even glancing up at the heroes.

"I don't know where George is." Lorna said, looking at the heroes. "You said you know where he is?"

Dream looked at George too.

"I don't know where he is." George said quietly. He didn't know why he said that. He could have said he knew, and he was safe, and he would go get him and return him.

But he honestly don't want to come back.

He's been GNotFound for most of the entire two weeks. He wasn't even sure George Davidson existed anymore.

"What do you mean you don't know where he is." Dream said, eyes wide.

"I... uh..." George could feel bile rising in his throat and he swallowed.

His pendent flashed twice.



"Go. I'll sort this out. I'll make sure they get to the hospital, and the villain is questioned, and I'll go looking for George." Dream said, pushing George towards the door. George felt sick. He was going to throw up.

"G, just go." Dream pushed him again. George looked at his family once more, and turned to leave.

He left the house, where there was a massive crowd of people watching and waiting. Reporters too. How was it that reporters always got to the scene before police and paramedics do?

He could hear the sirens though, a few streets over.

"GNotFound! What happened? Where's the villain? Why did they attack this house?" The reporters shoved a camera and mic in his face.

"Um. The villain's gone. Can everyone please leave the scene so there is space for the emergency vehicles." He ordered, and most people listened, backing away.

"Why this house? And what do you know about the Blade? Why didn't you warn us he was back? What happened at the school?"

He didn't answer any other questions, just ran off.

He detransformed in an alley and walked out, right by a park. He ended up sitting against a tree and bringing his knees to his chin, hugging his legs.

And he cried.

It was one thing to have all the stress of villains on one of his identities, but another for it to impact his entire life. Whether he was George or GNotFound, he was responsible for everyone else. And it was his fault people got hurt.

He was a target of the Blade. His fault, because he selfishly formed a friendship with Dream as his civilian self, and got himself caught, and revealed he knows who GNotFound is. It's his fault his family was attacked. His fault the school was attacked. His fault Tommy nearly bled to death, Tubbo broke his leg and Lexi was hurt.

He didn't even deserve to know if she was ok. He deserved to live in the constant state of anxiety. He didn't deserve the relief in knowing she was ok. Because she's not ok. She was hurt because of him, and his family was attacked because of him. Everything is his fault and he deserves it.

He stayed there for hours. The sun set long ago, and he was alone in the night in the park. Out in the open, but hidden by shadows. He almost wished the Blade would just come take him.

He knew his phone was buzzing constantly, but he didn't have the energy to look at it.

"Oh thank god." He heard a voice, and didn't even look up as the footsteps quickly approached. He heard the leaves crunch as someone knelt in front of him.

"Georgie." The said so softly, a hand coming up to his cheek, lifting his head, but George stubbornly kept his eyes closed. Soft fingers brushed away the tears on his face.

"George, look at me." The soft voice said. George reluctantly opened his eyes, not surprised to see Dream in front of him.

Something about seeing the masked man made George lose it, because he started crying again,

sobs racking his body. Dream didn't hesitate to sit himself next to George and pull him closer.

"Shhh." Dream tried to calm him, an arm tight around his shoulders and a hand brushing through his hair. George was curled against Dream's chest, hands back to covering his own face. "It's ok, I've got you. You're ok."

George shook his head. He wasn't ok.

"Your family is alright. Your sister was hurt but is at the hospital. But she's completely fine now, they did some tests and she's awake and asking for you. Like your parents are as well." Dream said.

George looked up at Dream, who smiled down at him, brushing the hair out of his eyes.

"You checked on them?" George choked out. Dream nodded.

"Every hour. While I looked for you." He said.

George dug his fingernails into his knees. Dream checked on his family, but he didn't.

"Why." George whispered.

"Well, I care about you. And that means I care about them." Dream said, the hand that was brushing through his hair now tugging one of George's hand off his knees.

"They were hurt because of me." George whispered

"No. They were hurt because of the Blade, George. This isn't your fault."

"Because the Blade is after me. He's after me and my family suffered the consequences. And my friends. And my school. Everything is my fault. I should never have let him know I know GNotFound's name. I never should have become friends with you." George sobbed.

Dream rubbed his arm.

"All of this is the Blade's fault. You can't lose sight of the real villain." Dream said softly. "You haven't done anything wrong. And you being my friend is a good thing. In fact, it is the best thing that's happened to me."

"No it's not." George wiped his face.

"It is. I'm dead serious." And his tone sounded true.

George let his head fall back against Dream, and the hand returned to threading through his hair, calming him down more.

"I can't do this anymore."

"Do what?"

"Anything. I'm so exhausted." George closed his eyes, trying to press away the tears.

"It will be over soon, I can feel it." Dream said, and George wanted to throw up at the optimism. Everyone keeps saying that. It won't be over soon.

"It's never going to end." George whispered.

George could feel Dream shake his head, but he said nothing more. They stayed like that for a while longer.

"Do you want me to take you to the hospital? To see your family?" Dream asked. George swallowed.

"I can go myself." He said softly.

"You sure? It will be quicker if I take you." Dream said. George lifted his head and pulled away from Dream, finding himself missing the warmth and comfort.

"You've done enough for me tonight." He said, standing up. Dream stood up too.

"George..." Dream hesitated. "You should answer your phone. I imagine your family and friends have been worried."

"It's fine. I haven't answered them much recently anyways." George shrugged, wiping his face one last time to get rid of the embarrassing evidence of tears.

"You don't have to punish yourself." Dream said with pursed lips.

"That's not what it is." George sighed. "I can't explain it." He ran a hand through his hair.

Not talking to his friends was to protect them. Not because he was punishing himself.

"Thanks for tonight, Dream. For everything." He said. Dream smiled, and stepped forward to pull George in for a hug again.

"You know I'd do anything for you." Dream said softly.

"I don't understand why." George whispered back.

"I don't need to explain myself." Dream said as he pulled away. "You're special."

"There's nothing special about me."

"If you had even a drop of what I think of you, you'd consider yourself the most incredible person in the world." Dream said with earnest eyes.

George felt his cheeks tint pink at the overwhelming compliments.

"Goodnight, George." Dream said with a gentle smile.

"Night Dream." George whispered back, as the hero turned and left the park.

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"I know. He wouldn't say why." George heard his parents talking downstairs. He was sitting at the top, listening to their conversation.

"That's the second time a villain has attacked him. Do you think he's involved in something dangerous?" His father said.

"I think I know." Lorna said with a sigh, and George felt his heart start racing.

There is no way she knows, right?

"I think him and Dream know each other." She said.

"What?" Mark replied. George felt a little bit of relief that she doesn't think he's a hero.

"I think he knows Dream's identity. That hero has come over multiple times now, he knows George. He knows us. He's saved him multiple time. I wouldn't be surprised if it's one of George's school friends." She said.

"You can't be serious. And you think villains are after him because they know he's friends with Dream?"

"Well, I obviously don't know for sure. But multiple times now I've seen Dream with George. He brought him home once. He knows where he lives. And the way he looks at George... it seemed like he genuinely cares."

George didn't want to hear anymore. He wanted to sleep. He wanted to sleep so badly but he knew he couldn't. He had to be GNotFound again, on the rooftops soon. Once his parents went to bed.

But what if a villain attacks his home again?  
It's clear there is no line the Blade won't cross.

He tried to swallow but it felt like there was a dagger in his throat, suffocating him and making him bleed out. He went to his room and pulled out his phone, ignoring the million messages from all his friends.

He clicked on the contact and waited for an answer for a few moments.

"George?"

"Phil, I don't know what to do." George sobbed, a hand covering his eyes as he sat on his bed.

"Ok, deep breaths, George. You can't figure anything out if you're panicking." Phil said. George tried taking a few deep breaths, but was struggling.

"My family was attacked. What if it happens again? I can't go be GNotFound. But I can't be George. I just don't know what to do. I don't know who I even am." He said.

"George, listen to me." Phil said. "I know how hard this must be for you. I know how much you've sacrificed for the city and your family. You've barely been home, I know. You feel guilty, and I can't imagine how exhausted you are. I am so sorry about everything that's happened."

"Don't apologise." George mumbled.

"I should. Because it is my fault, I'm taking responsibility. Tonight though, tonight you should get some sleep in your bed." Phil said.

"But... I have to take *pills* to sleep. And what if there's an attack while I'm sleeping? Or an alert somewhere. I can't wake up. The Blade could get me or my family. I need to be GNotFound, like you said." George said, wiping his face.

"Tonight you sleep. You can have a night off. I'm getting Sapnap to watch your house. How does that sound?" Phil said.

"Sapnap? But that's not fair to ask that of him. He's just a kid too. You promised he wouldn't get as involved, even though he has the diamond permanently." George said.

"Sapnap was the one who asked me how he can help you. You know he has his Diamond permanently now anyways, and will only transform to help if you're in danger. You know he won't even think twice about watching you for one night." Phil said.

"Ok." George said quietly, admitting defeat.

"Ok. Now go take your pills. Sapnap will be watching your house, you won't even know he is there." Phil said.

"I can take my pills..." George said slowly, feeling a bit of anxiety flood his stomach.

"Yes."

After the phone call, George left his room and went downstairs to his parents.

"Could I... uh... have my sleep pills?" He asked. His mother smiled and nodded, walking with him to the bathroom. She doesn't even know this is the first time in weeks he's taking them.

"You know I love you, George. You can tell us anything." Lorna said as he took a deep breath and swallowed them.

He felt the regret immediately, but shoved it down.

"I know. I love you too." He hugged her goodnight before returning to his room.

He sat there for about fifteen minutes, waiting for the sleep to kick in.

His phone started ringing once again, and it made him jump from the unexpectedness. He looked at it and saw Clay's name.

He impulsively picked it up and answered.

"George. Finally." Clay sighed in relief. "Are you ok? Is your family ok?"

"I'm fine, so are they. Lexi just has a concussion but she's good."

"That's good to hear." Clay said. George yawned and lay down. "Are you at home?"

"Yeah. I'm so tired." George said, starting to feel the effect of the pills.

"Do you think you might take your pills tonight?" Clay asked.

"I did take them." George said.

"That's great!" He could hear Clay's smile. "That's amazing, I'm so proud, George. This will be good, you'll get some much needed sleep." Clay said.

"I'm still worried. What if there's another attack in the night." George mumbled, letting his eyes close as he spoke because they hurt to keep open.

"The heroes will protect you."

"I know." George hummed. And then he smiled to himself as he brought up a memory from earlier. "Dream said I'm special, you know."

Clay chuckled. "Did he?"

"Mmhm." George felt heavy. "Dunno why though."

"Well, you are special." Clay said.

"You sound like Dream." George mumbled.

"Do I, George?" Clay said, a small smile in his voice. "Do I sound like Dream? That's interesting."

"You kinda have the same height as him too." George yawned again, rolling over. His consciousness was slipping, his voice was low and drowsy.

"That is a very weird coincidence." Clay said with a soft laugh.

"It is. It's a shame you're not him." George said.

"Why is it a shame?"

"Because it would be great if you were." George sighed. "Everything would make sense."

"Make sense? What would make sense?"

"Why I trust you both so much. Why you both care. Why you think I'm special." *Why I like you both.*

Even though he was on the verge of sleep, George snapped his eyes open at that thought. *No. No, I don't like them both. I like Clay. My mind is a fool.*

"Do you wish me and Dream were the same?" Clay asked in a low voice.

"Sometimes." George whispered.

"Sometimes?"

"Sometimes I think it would be the worst thing in the world." George closed his eyes again. *Because Dream loves GNotFound, not George.*

"Why?"

"Because then I'd lose one of you." He admitted softly.

Clay was silent for a few minutes, as George was slipping further and further from the world.

"You'd never lose me." Clay whispered.

"Yeah?" George mumbled, the phone slipping from his hand.

"Yeah." Clay smiled. "Goodnight, Georgie."

"Night, Dream."

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Nick stared at George's window, throwing his coin from his right hand to his left as his thoughts ran wild. He was leaning against a lamppost across the road from the house.

He had been here for a few hours. The night was in its peak, the moon at the top of the sky. It was quiet in the street that was bustling with noise earlier in the day.

He wasn't tired, although he would normally be falling asleep around now. He had too much to think about. He had too much guilt sitting in his stomach.

He heard the crunch of footsteps and turned immediately. He flicked his coin in the air and it transformed into his axe, and he caught the hilt of it as it flipped.

Dream stood several yards away, and Nick caught his smile in the light.

"Nice trick." Dream said, walking closer. Sarnap flicked his axe back into his coin and sent him a small smile. Forgetting that it couldn't be seen behind his white face mask.

"Not as cool as your pen though." He nodded at the small item sticking out of Dream's pocket.

"It's called Spirit." Dream said, pulling it out and flicking it between his fingers.

"You named it?"

"Well, I've grown attached." Dream smiled, pocketing it. "G refuses to name his bow though."

"I'll name my coin." Nick looked at it for a few moments. "Mars."

"I like it." Dream nodded in approval.

"What are you doing here? Did L send you too?" Nick asked. Dream shrugged.

"Not explicitly. But I wanted to come anyways." He said. "If you want to sleep, I can take over." He offered.

"No, I'm fine. I want to stay. George is-" *My friend*. "George is our priority."

"Yeah." Dream said, looking at the window.

"You really care for him?" Nick said, pursing his lips behind the mask.

"Of course." Dream said, not taking his eyes off the window. "He is one of the most important people in my life. I'd do anything for him."

Nick watched Dream for a few moments with furrowed eyebrows. The hero had a look of pure adoration as he looked at the window and spoke of George.

"You like him. Don't you." Nick said, in slight disbelief as it hit him too.

Dream looked at him quickly, with wide eyes.

"What! Why would you think that? I like G." He said very quickly. Nick blinked.

"I knew it! I knew you liked GNotFound." Nick said with a smile. "But you talk about George the same way you talk about him."

"George is a friend." Dream said quickly again.

"Yeah. But dude, you're looking at his fucking *window* like it's the love of your life." Nick scoffed.

Dream was silent, and he swallowed nervously.

"I can't like two people."

"Well, I hate to break it to you buddy, but it seems like you do." Nick slapped him on the shoulder. Dream looked down with a frown.

"That's not fair to either of them." He mumbled. Nick paused for a moment.

"Well... I mean, sort of. If one likes you back then it's not really ok to like someone else." Nick said carefully.

"Well. Don't worry, because neither of them like me." Dream said with a chuckle.

Nick hummed. He knew who George liked. And it was not Dream.

"GNotFound rejected me and said he liked someone else. And George... well, he likes someone who likes a girl. And he knows I like G, so he doesn't like me."

"How do you know he likes a girl." Nick asked with furrowed eyebrows.

"He's told me. Wouldn't tell me who though, for some reason. But I get it." Dream shrugged.

Nick didn't know how to respond.

"Tell me about yourself, Sapnap." Dream suddenly said, sitting down on the pavement. Nick gave him a weird look at first, but sat down beside him.

"I thought the whole 'secret identity' thing was supposed to, you know, be a secret." Nick responded.

"Well. What do you know about me?" Dream said.

"I know you're in high school, you're a minor. You like guys, and you have a crush on two people." Nick counted off on his fingers.

"Alright. So tell me those things equivalent to you." Dream shrugged.

"Ok... I am also in high school and am a minor. And I... well... I like someone." He started fiddling with his coin.

"You do?" Dream asked with a smile.

"Yeah; but it's new territory for me. It's a guy. I've never liked a guy before. I don't exactly know my sexuality, all I know is that I like *him*." Nick said with a small smile.

Dream put a hand on his shoulder.

"Then that's all you need to know."

## Chapter End Notes

Dreamnap bonding moment



# Captain Puffy

## Chapter Summary

The heroes finally have a meeting to discuss recent events. George, Nick and Clay go suit shopping for prom. And George realises he doesn't need to attend any more therapy sessions

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Are you alright, George?" Phil said, staring at the boy in front of him.

George just stared right back at him as he said "Mask on." And then sat down on the couch. "I'm fine." Phil pursed his lips at the response and sat opposite him.

"And your family is ok?"

"They are fine." George said stiffly.

"Do you have any ideas for how we can protect your family too?" Phil asked.

"I have no idea." George whispered. Phil nodded slowly.

"Well. The best we can do is you staying near your house while you're transformed." He said.

"Ok." George said, not looking at Phil. *The best we can do. Seems like everything at the moment is only the best we can do.*

*When will it end.*

"Are you sure you're alright?" Phil asked.

"I said I'm fine."

"It's just that when you called me last night-"

"Phil." George interrupted, looking at the man with a tense jaw. There was a knock at the front of the store that came as a welcomed interruption, and Phil gladly left to let in Dream.

George let out a breath when the man left the room. It had been a rough morning, but an excruciatingly easy night. He slept through the whole thing thanks to his pills, but now he felt extra groggy than usual. His body wasn't used to 8 hours of sleep.

Dream entered and smiled, sitting down beside George and nudging him with his shoulder in greeting. George just sent a tight-lip smile back. Dream seemed just as tired as he was.

"Alright. I have a list prepared. Because there's so much to discuss." Phil said as they waited, holding up a notepad. George's leg strayed bouncing up and down. There really was too much to talk about.

"Ok. Let's start with the fight with four villains?" Phil said.

"Wait let's start with George. I know you've spoken to me and GNotFound separately about what's happening but I still feel out of the loop. George has been attacked multiple times, but the school and his home incident was *since* the new plan you guys thought of. What is your plan? Because it's not working and I want to help more." Dream said. Phil sighed and George suppressed a groan.

"There's not much you really can do apart from be there as soon as possible if there is an attack." Phil said.

"And George and I have organised a place for him to hide out during attacks that I take him to myself." George said.

"Tell me where it is in case I'm the only one that shows up." Dream said.

"No, because... it only works as a plan because George knows GNotFound's identity." Phil said. Dream scoffed.

"How? Do you take him to your house or something?"

"Dream, just trust me on this, ok?" George said. Dream tensed his jaw.

"Then where is George most of the time? I've gone to check on him repeatedly these past two weeks but he's never home, or anywhere for that matter."

"When possible, George hides." George said quietly.

"What? So he's just locked away instead of living his life? Hanging out with friends? You got mad at me when I suggested we hide him in a bunker for a month until we defeat Blade. That's exactly what you've done." Dream said to Phil.

"It's not like that. George can go where he wants, it's just if he can, he should hide. The Blade can't torture someone he can't find." Phil said, as George fell quiet.

"Please tell me where. I can keep him company." Dream pleaded.

"That's not necessary. I-I'm with him a lot." George said. Anything to stop Dream from insisting to spend time with the boy who doesn't exist during the day.

"I want to see him too." Dream frowned.

"Let's discuss that later. We need to talk about the attacks themselves and the villains you fought and the Blade." Phil interrupted, seeing the tension forming.

"Right. So the attack at the school?" George prompted. Dream sunk in his seat, arms across his chest but he didn't press the George issue further.

"Yes. Well, we now know that Blade can do more than two villains. This is bad, because I still don't know how. Run me through the villains and their powers so I can figure out the jewels." Phil said, pen at the ready.

"One of them was like a silver costume and made these glittery barriers and could fly." George said.

"Yes, that's the only one I could identify from the news. Specularite." Phil said, tapping his pen on the note he had.

"The villain we fought yesterday at George's house." Dream leaned forward, pulling out the purple pendent and handed it to Phil. "It shot this sticky purple goo that hardens on you and you can't move." Dream said.

"Amethyst." Phil said, looking at the jewel briefly before placing it on the table behind him and jotting it down.

"And there was one making explosions. He was a grey villain that could make these balls, and where he threw them, they exploded." George said.

Phil hummed in thought.

"There's so many jewels, give me a second." He chuckled, squinting as he thought. "Hematite! Yes. That's it." Phil said, writing it down. "And the last villain?"

"We don't know. They didn't seem to use their power." Dream said. Phil furrowed his eyebrows.

"They didn't use a weapon either. The guy was in a red and white costume and had a small red jewel in a pendent. Um... yeah, no weapon though for some reason. And we didn't see what power he had." George said.

"This was the one on the news that Blade took away, correct?" Phil said. The heroes nodded.

"This is going to sound crazy... but I swear I saw the jewel flash twice." George said. Dream and Phil both turned to him.

"That's not possible." Phil said with narrowed eyes.

"I'm just saying what I saw. It could have been the light." George said with a shrug.

"I thought you said only the precious jewels had countdowns." Dream said to Phil.

"I did. Because they do. Only four have countdowns because they are extremely powerful. And even if what GNotFound saw was correct, that means that the villain must have *used* their power for a countdown to happen. That doesn't make sense, because you two claimed you never even saw him do anything. Along with the fact no other jewels have countdowns that I know of." Phil said.

"Maybe I'm wrong then." George chewed on his lip.

"I'll do some research with the jewel you described and see if I can find the one, even though we don't know what power. I'll work backwards. It might take some time, this kind of research is difficult, figuring out the difference between fact and legend." Phil said.

"Maybe it will tell us why Blade didn't fight us either. G was about to transform back. He could have waited to see, could have fought us." Dream said.

"Really?" Phil asked with wide eyes, looking at George.

"Yeah. But do you remember how concerned he seemed? He kept looking at the villain you hurt and then looking back. He seemed extremely conflicted. Maybe he didn't want to risk losing the jewel the villain had." George said to Dream.

"Or maybe he cared about the civilian." Dream added with a shrug. George snorted at that.

"Blade? Care about a civilian? If he cared about him, why would he give him a jewel in the first place? No way. It's because he was probably about to transform back himself. He'd rather hide his

identity than find out mine." George said with a laugh.

"But... I don't remember his earring flashing." Dream said slowly. George's smile fell at that.

"Me... me neither..."

"How long had the villains been attacking the school by the time you saw the Blade?" Phil asked, leaning forward.

"It was a long time." George whispered.

"Like fifteen, twenty minutes." Dream said. His eyes were blown wide.

"You're telling me... that the Blade manipulated *four* villains. And his countdown should have ended... and he was still transformed?" Phil asked.

"Maybe he detransformed and then transformed back?" George asked nervously, swallowing the bile rising in his throat.

"He would need at least half an hour before he transformed back." Phil said, writing down in his notepad.

"Ok... maybe that's the power of the red villain? He can pause the timer of Blade's jewel. So he was just there for that." George said as the thought struck him. Dream nodded along.

"I haven't ever heard of a jewel like that. But I'll have to do some research." Phil said, chewing on his pen in thought.

"It still doesn't explain why he left and didn't fight. He wasn't going to transform back. G was. Why would he leave and stop all the villains? He could have even let the others keep attacking after he left, but he let them *all* go." Dream said.

"I have no idea." Phil sighed.

"And why was there an entire fortnight break between the attack at the school and the attack last night?" Dream added.

"I mean, it's not uncommon for the Blade to wait a while before the next attack, right?" Phil said.

"But two whole weeks? That's longer than usual. And he's clearly more powerful now. He manipulated four villains at once and somehow didn't need to detransform. If he made an attack each day, it would tire us both out completely." George said, seeing where Dream was coming from.

"It would tire him out too. Don't forget that underneath the mask is a civilian as well." Phil said.

"Who could it possibly be that would want to cause mass chaos?" Dream said.

"And why does he want our jewels? What happens when you get the precious jewels?" George asked Phil.

"That's also something I'm not sure of. I have a lot of research to do." Phil sighed.

"Nothing makes any sense." George said, rubbing his temples. "Oh shit, I got one more thing I completely forgot about."

"What is it?"

"You remember the villain that stole the safe from the Mayor? Awesomedude or something." George said to Dream.

"Oh the guy that like, poisoned me or something." Dream shuddered.

"He found me the other day, and we had a chat. He didn't attack though." George said.

"What happened?" Phil sat up straighter, and Dream also had wide eyes.

"Said he doesn't work for anyone, but the safe contained documents that are proof of the Mayor being corrupt. Apparently he ran some illegal insurance business after his wife died and took a lot of people's money. And when he came to the city, he blackmailed people to make him a candidate and also rigged all the votes to become mayor. And Awesomedude said that he just wants justice for the city, and he actually looks up to us." He looked at Dream. "He was also sorry for hurting you."

"There is proof the Mayor is corrupt? He did illegal things?" Phil said with wide eyes.

Dream slowly leaned back into the couch, his eyes lowering to the floor and the part of his face visible growing slightly pale.

"Yes. The the stuff that the new Candidate Sam Warden has been talking about. He has the proof, the stuff from the safe."

Phil looked at Dream, and swallowed before taking a deep breath.

"Ok. That's interesting. Um. Why did Awesome-dude-guy do that?"

"I'm not sure. Just said he wants justice."

"Who is he?"

"Also don't know." George sighed.

Phil just hummed in response.

"Back to the fight, with the villain that you said was red and white. He got taken away because he was hurt, how did he get hurt?" Phil asked.

George turned to Dream, who sunk slightly in his seat.

"I, um, I struck him with my sword." He said.

"Why? You know that's just a civilian under the Blade's manipulation. And villains can't heal when we take off the jewel. You had the intent of grabbing his pendent but you still stabbed him?" Phil said, narrowed eyes.

"I don't know, I wasn't thinking."

"You're lucky he actually got away. Gave him time to heal. That was a bad wound, Dream. You could have killed him. And you did the same thing at George's house, you were going to hurt the villain their more than necessary." George added on.

"He was threatening George! I didn't know where George was and the guy was hurting his family,

I just got swept up in emotion, ok?" Dream crossed his arms over his chest.

"No, it's not ok, Dream. You can't let your emotions take over." Phil said.

"Well you guys keep reminding me I'm impulsive, so blame the fact you even gave me a jewel." Dream muttered.

They didn't say much more to that. They sat in a tense silence for a while as they thought about everything they had addressed.

They had more questions than answers at this point.

"I have to go home and check on my son soon. Tommy got quite injured in the attack and his brothers have been watching him. But he has a checkup at the Doctor's today, so I better go take him." Phil said.

"Do you know what happened to him in the fight?" Dream asked, finally snapping out of whatever thoughts he was having and looking up.

"We don't know what happened, he doesn't remember a thing. I got a call from the hospital that he was there. I was watching the news live and terrified out of my mind. But he's doing ok. Still the same old Tommy." Phil said with a slight chuckle.

"That's good to hear." George said. Phil nodded.

"Ok. Well, who wants to leave first?" Phil said.

"Wait. Why can't I know the plan with George again?" Dream said, looking between the two.

"Because it's a plan that works because George knows GNotFound's identity." Phil repeated with a sigh.

"Drop it, Dream." George said with slight frustration. Dream frowned, and looked at the floor.

"I feel like I'm not doing anything. G knows everything and *Sapnap* was even asked to watch him last night. I barely know anything that's going on and I feel like I'm useless." Dream said in a softer tone.

George felt a twinge of guilt at that. He knows that Dream must feel a bit frustrated he can't know the plan. But knowing the plan means he would know George is GNotFound. And they can't have that.

"GNotFound, how about you leave first." Phil said, standing up. G nodded, and Clay watched as his partner left the room.

Phil sighed and sat down on the sofa where G once sat, looking at Dream with a sympathetic expression.

"How do you feel? About your stuff with your father?" He said carefully. Clay scoffed.

"I'm not surprised. I'm a little scared though. If the evidence is real then he could go to jail and I don't know what me and Drista would do." Clay said, chewing on his lip.

"If it ever comes to that, you can both stay with me." Phil offered. Clay hummed.

He couldn't do that to Phil. He already has Tommy and Wilbur to look after, and Techno as well.

Plus Clay doesn't think he could handle staying in the same house as L.

It was hard enough keeping Dream separate from Clay. Living with the man who acts like his *boss* would be too weird.

"Thank you for the offer." Clay said. "I'm more worried about George than my family situation though." Phil sighed at that.

"Look, Clay. I know it must be difficult to not be active all the time protecting your friend. But you being near George when he isn't hiding is exactly the best thing you can do." Phil said.

"It's not good enough just being near him as Clay. When something happens, we have to separate. So I can transform and he can run off to go hide somewhere that I don't even know. I just have to let him run off alone because GNotFound is never in sight." Clay huffed.

"I know. But George isn't as weak as he seems. He's clever and knows to keep out of trouble. You can trust he gets himself to safety, especially if GNotFound shows up. He makes sure George is safe before doing anything else." Phil said.

"But *I* want to know George is safe!" Clay exclaimed. "I checked his house every day the past two weeks and he hasn't been home once. Not even when his family was attacked. Do you know how much it stresses me out not knowing where he is?"

"I know it must be stressful, but George is ok-"

"No he's not! He's not ok!" Clay yelled. "He barely even texts me back anymore, and doesn't come to any of our friends hangouts. I found him sobbing at a park last night. He doesn't sleep, he doesn't talk to anyone. I'm *worried* about him, Phil. But neither you or G seem to care." Clay said with frustration and pain on his face. "He is not ok and I don't know what to do to help him."

"You really do care for George." Phil said, pursing his lips and looking at the boy.

"No shit." Clay scoffed.

"If it would make you feel at ease, you could watch him at night? Then he could sleep in his own bed." Phil suggested.

"Yes. Please." Clay said, sitting up straight.

"Even though you would get less sleep-"

"I don't care. I'll probably still get more than George ever does." Clay said very quickly. Phil smiled slightly.

"Ok then." Phil said with a nod. Clay hugged him, taking Phil by surprise.

"Thank you." He whispered.

"Don't thank me. I should be thanking you." Phil said in response.

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"Nick's coming?" George asked, turning to look at his Mom who was focused on driving.

"Yes, George. His parents are both very busy and prom is literally this week and neither of you have suits. It's been planned for a few days." She said with a chuckle.

George swallowed, and started fiddling with the material on his knees. Him and Nick hadn't spoken since yesterday, since their fight. George was convinced Nick hated him.

After his meeting with Phil and Dream this morning, George was *going* to go continue being GNotFound but his mother sent him dozens of messages asking him to come home for something important.

George assumed important meant a villain.  
Lorna classifies suit shopping as a priority.

"I don't even want to go to prom." George said with a sigh.

"Yes you do." Lorna replied simply. "Oh, is that Clay?" She slowed the car down. George looked out the window where she was looking. Clay was in fact there, walking down the street with his earbuds in.

Lorna pulled over beside the boy and George sunk in the seat in embarrassment. He didn't want to go suit shopping. He didn't want to talk to Clay. He didn't want to do anything. He wanted to be GNotFound and watch over his house.

"Clay." Lorna called, and it was a miracle the boy heard. He took out the earbuds and beamed when he saw them both.

"Hi Lorna, hi George!" He said cheerfully. "How are you both after yesterday? How's Lexi?"

"We are all doing better, thank you. Lexi is fine, just resting. Where are you off too?" She asked.

"Oh, just walking home. I... met up with a friend." He said with a shrug.

"That's quite a far walk. Do you want a lift?" Lorna asked.

"I'm ok. I don't want to make you have to detour from wherever you are heading." He said.

"It's not an issue. We are just going to buy a suit for George for prom. Nick's coming too. Have you organised your prom outfit yet?" She asked.

"Oh. Um. Not yet. Father isn't the type of person to take me suit shopping. I just assumed I'd wear one of his suits or something." Clay shrugged.

George wanted to die. He knew where this was going. And it would end up with him blushing at seeing Clay in a suit.

"Oh sweetheart, that's ridiculous. You should get to wear your own suit for your senior prom! Would you like you join us?" She asked. George winced, but quickly changed it to a smile when Clay looked at him.

"Would that be ok?" Clay seemed to ask him, and he nodded.

"Yeah. But just warning you, Mom will take a billion pictures and embarrass us all." He said, and Lorna lightly hit him on the arm with a smile.

"Ok, well I'd love to come. I feel like we haven't hung out in ages, George." Clay said, opening the backseat and climbing inside. George swallowed and glanced at his Mom who's eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"Haven't you been hanging out with Clay and all your friends like every day this week?" Lorna



asked.

"Yeah, of course." George said, glancing at Clay, who realised he messed up.

"It's a joke." Clay interrupted with a fake laugh. "We see each other every day that I like to pretend we haven't seen each other in forever." Lorna chuckled at that.

"Oh, right. I'm not very good with sarcasm these days." She said, continuing the drive towards Nick's house.

George and Clay just both laughed, and George sent Clay a quick grateful smile.

"Who were you meeting with?" Lorna asked Clay.

"Oh. Um. This... a girl." Clay nervously said.

George sunk in his seat.

"Oh, I see." Lorna smiled at him in the rear-vision mirror, but glanced down at George and sent him a pity-smile. George hated it.

When they arrived at Nick's house, the brunet was already waiting on the front porch. As he walked towards the car, George grew increasingly nervous.

Nick entered the backseat, being slightly surprised by Clay.

"Hi, Nick." Lorna said with a wide smile.

"Hi, Lorna. How are you? What even happened yesterday?" Nick said. George stayed staring straight ahead out the front window.

"Oh, we are all good. Just a villain attack. Lexi went to hospital but she's ok now, just resting." Lorna said as she drove off again.

"Oh, shit. I mean, damn. Sorry. I'm glad you guys are all ok, I had no idea." Nick said.

"I thought George might've told you what happened." Lorna said, sending her son a confused glance.

"No, it's ok. I get you guys were all preoccupied." Nick said with a small chuckle, leaning back in the seat, turning to the dirty blonde next to him. "Sup Clay."

"Hey." Clay smiled back.

"We found him on the side of the road and we are keeping him." Lorna said, turning towards the mall.

"You make me sound like a stray animal." Clay laughed.

George laughed too, turning to look back at Clay, and making eye contact with Nick. He tensed up, but Nick just sent him a small smile.

What did that smile mean? Did that smile mean Nick hated him? Forgave him? Still mad at him?

George sent the same small smile back before turning to face the front.

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George decided that trying on formal suits was just as bad as sitting on an empty rooftop for an entire day in a skin-tight *blue* suit with nothing to do. If not worse.

"Let's just get the first one." George groaned. Lorna shook her head, handing him a new one and pushing him back into the change rooms.

"You hated it. And so did I. It was bright yellow and Nick pulled it out and you thought it was green." She said.

"I don't care anymore, I don't even want to go to prom." George said.

"Yes you do." Lorna said, closing the curtain for him.

"I really, really don't."

"Trust me, you do. You're too wrapped up in your head and obsessing about the dance and date and the cliché part that you're forgetting it's a celebration for the end of school. Spend this night with your friends before you graduate and go to college." She said.

George lowered his hands that were holding the new suit and his eyebrows furrowed. *Right.*

"Oh my gosh, Nick! You look dashing! Handsome." He heard his Mom fuss over the brunet that must have walked out of his changing room.

"I know I do." Nick said, and George could hear the smirk on his face.

He sighed and hung up the new suit, looking at the other six that he and his mother hated. He just sighed and slowly got changed.

He could hear Lorna fussing over Nick outside, claiming the suit he was wearing was the one, and she was taking pictures to send to his parents.

When George finally finished getting changed, he looked in the mirror. He wouldn't have picked it initially, but now it was on, he actually kind of liked it.

He had long black pants, and a black jacket as well. And although his undershirt was also black, his tie and belt were royal blue. He ran his hands down the satin tie, and twisted from side to side. It fit him well, making him seem slightly taller, but also slimmer with the single breasted jacket hugging his waist.

He ran a hand through his hair with a small smile. He didn't look half bad. Throw in a little bit of hair gel, some proper dress shoes and even a watch, and maybe he'd be prom-ready.

"Mom, what do you think." George said, opening the curtain again.

But he was met with Clay standing just on the other side of the small walkway, walking out of his own changing room, adjusting the sleeve of his jacket. He was wearing a double breasted, deep emerald suit jacket, over the top of a white undershirt and black tie with long black trousers and a gold buckle belt. He looked taller somehow, and the jacket colour made his eyes brighter than they already were.

George had to focus on keeping his mouth firmly shut as his eyes dragged over the man in front of him. He didn't even care how obvious he was checking the other out. Clay had to know how hot he

looked.

"George, I- wow- you... you look. Wow." Clay said, staring at George with a smile.

"You too." George said with an awkward laugh, hating how the jacket sleeves hugged Clay's biceps.

"Oh my goodness!" Lorna said, walking over and looking between the two boys. "Oh! You both look so handsome. Oh, Georgie." She walked over and put her hands on his shoulders. "You look so grown up." She said.

"Mom." George shrugged her off, blushing from embarrassment. And from seeing the boy in green opposite him.

"Clay, you too." Lorna turned to him, patting his arms. "That green really just brings out those gorgeous eyes. They really are exactly Holly's eyes." She said.

Clay's polite smile fell slightly.

"Really?" He whispered. Lorna smiled and patted him on the cheek.

"You and Drista both have her eyes, you know." She said. Clay smiled again, but he was beginning to tear up slightly. George was horrified. His Mom was making Clay cry and he wasn't even sure how or why.

"You knew my mother?" Clay asked. Lorna nodded.

"Yes, I did. Years ago, before you were even born though. It was when I stayed abroad in America. But I left to go back to England." She said sadly. Clay nodded, wiping just beneath his eyes.

Nick had walked over now, and stood next to George. He was wearing a dark maroon jacket over a black undershirt and tie, with black pants and belt.

"If she could see you right now." Lorna said with a sad sigh, patting down Clay's jacket. "She would be so incredibly proud of her son."

Clay pulled Lorna in for a hug, letting his head fall against her shoulder. George felt awkward now, and Nick tugged on his sleeve, making him walk away.

"Thought we should give him a moment." Nick said when they were out of eyesight and earshot.

George nervously turned to Nick, fiddling with his jacket sleeves. He swallowed and looked up to find Nick already looking at him.

They looked at each other for a few seconds, and George's eyes started watering unintentionally.

"I'm so sorry, please don't hate me, I know I've been a shit friend the past year but I'm selfish and still need you." George finally said, lip trembling as he spoke and he desperately tried to keep his tears in his eyes.

Nick just sighed and pulled him into a hug, patting him on the back.

"George, I don't hate you. I told you that. I was just a bit frustrated but I'm fine. It was just a fight." Nick chuckled and pulled away, putting a hand on George's shoulder and staring at him. "Yeah, you've been a little absent this past year but I know you have shit going on, I don't blame you."

"It's not an excuse to make you feel like I don't listen to you." George said. Nick shrugged.

"I was being dramatic."

"No." George shook his head. "You weren't. You have been here for me the whole year, but I feel like I haven't done anything for you."

"Well I haven't done much for you, either. You barely tell me anything that's going on." Nick said with a sad smile.

"And neither do you." George said. He then sighed and let his head fall against the hand still resting on his shoulder. "Tell me what's on your mind."

"I'll tell you a secret if you tell me a secret." Nick said with a smile. George let out a laugh, shrugging the hand off his shoulder.

"Really? What kind of secret?"

"One that maximum two people know." Nick said with a smirk and a glint in his eyes.

"Ok. Fine." George thought of something relatively harmless. "You go first."

"No. You first." Nick crossed his arms over his chest.

"Fine." George scoffed. He quickly checked over his shoulder to see if his Mom was listening. She wasn't nearby, so he sighed and turned back to look at Nick. "I don't take my sleeping pills. I've only taken them twice in my life. Once last night and once a few weeks ago accidentally." He said.

There was no response, so George looked up and saw Nick with furrowed eyebrows.

"George." He sighed. "Why?"

"It's terrifying. They knock me out and I can't wake up for alarms. What if there's an alert, or a villain attacking my family. Or a fire or something. It just makes me really anxious." George said.

"If it's that bad, you should have told your parents or something. There are other options."

"I don't have time to sort out my stupid insomnia. I've been busy." George said, then shook his head. "What's your secret?"

Nick went from slightly concerned to suddenly nervous. He scratched the back of his neck and looked around as well.

"Ok. Um."

Nick swayed on his feet, then his hand went to a bracelet on his other wrist and started fiddling with it. George's eyes trailed on it. It was simple, and tight on his wrist and a plain white.

"I've never seen that before." George pointed it out. Nick stopped fiddling with it and he tensed up.

"Oh. Um. Yeah. It's new." He said slowly. "It um. It actually has to do with my secret." Nick said softly.

"Yeah?" George said, looking back up.

"It... um. Ok, well... you're my best friend and I feel like I can trust you with anything and I've

been hiding this for a while and I feel bad you don't know it about me." Nick took a deep breath. George nodded and patted his shoulder.

"Of course. You know you can tell me anything. I know I've been a little absent for a while, but I just have a lot going on. What with school and my mental health and the villains after me for knowing GNotFo- I mean... for thinking I know Dream's identity. But you know we're still best friends and you can trust me with anything. Like I can trust you as well." George said with a smile. Nick nodded, swallowing.

"I keep forgetting the villains are after you for knowing Dream's identity." Nick said, chewing on his lip. George laughed slightly awkwardly.

"Yeah. Me too. At least I don't actually. Means they can't get his identity out of me." He said. George forgot everyone still thinks it's because he knows Dream, and not GNotFound.

"Right. Yeah." Nick said, looking at the floor.

"So what was the secret you wanted to tell me?" George asked.

"Right!" Nick looked back up. "Um, well..."

He hesitated for a long minute, looking at George who was waiting patiently.

"I like Karl."

George blinked in surprise, then grinned so wide and pulled Nick into a hug.

"Oh my god, you two would be perfect for each other! How did I not notice before?" George rambled loudly, pulling away. "Oh my god! It's the boy next door story."

Nick put George into a choke hold, clamping down on his mouth.

"Shut the fuck up, dumbass. This is why I didn't tell you. You're an idiot." Nick said, letting go when George licked his hand.

"Sorry. You two would be so cute though! You should ask him to prom! I'm sure he would say yes." George said with a smile. But when he saw Nick's teary eyes, his smile faltered slightly and his eyebrows furrowed. "Nick?"

"Sorry." Nick laughed, wiping his eyes. "I just... haven't told... anyone. And that's the first time I've acknowledged I like guys too. I don't really know my sexuality. I just know that I like Karl. A lot." Nick said.

George hugged him again.

"And that's all that matters." Nick said with determination in his voice. "Right?" He added a bit softer.

"Right." George agreed, squeezing him tighter. "You know I love you, right?" George said, and Nick nodded. "Good." He pulled away.

Nick tucked the bracelet under the sleeve of his jacket and shook out his arms.

"Speaking of boys we like." Nick turned George around and started walking him back over to the change rooms. "Did you see how good Clay looked in that suit? He looks almost as good as you do." Nick said, slapping him on the back. George scoffed and shoved him off.

"Shut up." He smiled. "But you look great in that suit too. Is that the one you're getting?" He asked.

"Gotta get my parent's approval, but I think so." Nick said, flexing his arms in the jacket.

"There you guys are." Clay said, appearing out of nowhere, still in his emerald suit. Still looking as handsome as ever. "Your Mom just went to call Nick's Mom. And she insisted on giving my Dad a call even though I know he won't answer her." He sighed.

Clay looked at Nick with a smile.

"Damn look at you." Clay said. Nick did a spin. "Hot." He added with a small chuckle.

"Damn right I am. And you're one to talk. Look at that!" Nick grabbed one of Clay's biceps. "Since when did you go to the gym?"

"I don't go to the gym." Clay chuckled, and then looked at George. "You... um... like I said, you look really good, George. Are you getting that suit?"

"Oh. Thanks. I think so." George tensed his teeth to hold back his blush. It didn't work, he knew his cheeks were pink. "You look really good too. Mom was right, the green does bring out your eyes."

"You can't even see the green." Nick scoffed.

"You think so?" Clay asked George with a smile creeping onto his face.

"Yeah." George looked at his feet.

"Jesus." Nick muttered, but neither of them heard.

"Alright! Nick, your family loved it and they want me to get you to facetime them. Clay, um, your father's secretary answered and she didn't seem to be pleased I was ringing. In fact, she also asked me to get you to call her." She said. Clay grimaced.

"I should have warned you about Tracy, sorry." Clay said.

"All good. Well, all of you go get changed back. You're lucky we didn't need any resizing or adjustments." She said, waving them all to their change rooms again.

Nick took a call, so George and Clay walked back without him, and Lorna went to the checkouts to chat with the employees.

"Thanks for before, by the way. In the car, when Mom thought I'd been hanging out with you guys. I know I haven't much the past weeks and I feel really bad and I can explain everything, but thank you for backing me up." George said.

"You don't have to explain yourself. And it was no problem, sorry I almost got you in trouble." Clay responded.

"I will. I owe you an explanation." George said, stopping outside the change rooms.

"That's a good choice for a suit. You like it?" Clay asked, looking George up and down again.

"Yeah. And Mom seems to like it as well." He shrugged.

"I do too." Clay smiled, looking down slightly at George. "You're beautiful, you know."

George was sure the blue on his tie and belt would turn red by the blush that was bleeding across his body.

"Oh so Nick gets *hot* and I get *beautiful*." He bit back, unsure how else to respond to the compliment as he stepped backwards into his change room, looking back out of the curtain at Clay.

Clay raised an eyebrow and let a puff of air out of his nose in a laugh as he lifted his own curtain.

"What? Would you prefer hot, too? Or attractive? Or pretty? Or sexy? Or-"

"Ok!" George slammed the curtain shut and spun around to face the mirror.

George could faintly hear Clay's wheeze, as he assessed how much damage the blush had caused to his pale face.

That boy in green would be the death of him.  
Seems like boys in green have a habit of doing that.

•

"George, you know this is a safe space." Puffy said. George nodded, and looked at the clock. There was a few minutes left.

"I will not tell anyone anything you say here. If there is something that has been weighing you down for a while, maybe even a whole year. You can tell me." She reiterated.

"I don't know why you think I'm hiding something." George responded, his fingers tracing the thread of the beanbag.

"I just know you have a lot going on and sometimes things we are hiding, whether they are big or small... getting them off our chest can help." She said carefully.

"I'm fine."

"You say that every meeting. But yet... you still come back each Monday."

"Well, yeah." George scoffed. "Remember these are for my attendance issues?" He said.

"Yes. And you recall you only needed to attend five of those?" She said with one raised eyebrow.

George froze, looking at her. He blinked.

"Oh. I forgot."

"I think you keep coming back because this space is good for you, to get away from everything. And that's ok." She smiled. George chewed on his tongue, thankful that it had pretty much healed from the truth villain.

"Well I guess there's no need for me to come back." He said, standing up and grabbing his bag. Puffy stood up too.

"Wait, George. You can still come see me if you want. I keep Mondays free for you. It doesn't have to be about your attendance, and I don't think it ever really was." She said quite quickly.

"Thanks for your help, Puffy. But nothing is wrong, and my attendance is still shit." George said in a robotic voice, not looking at her.

"Even if nothing is wrong, it can be good to just have a space you can come to each week to slow everything down and not feel like you need to *be anyone*. You don't have to be George or... or anyone that people expect you to be. You can just chill and talk about anything you need." She said, concern in her eyes.

George looked at the door, then back at Puffy.

"I have nothing to talk about." He grabbed the door handle.

"I think it's important that everyone has a chance to be themselves." She said as he walked out. George glanced back in the room.

*I don't have time to be myself.*

"Thanks Puffy."

He walked away.

•

"How was it?" Clay asked as George arrived at history.

"Oh. Um. My appointments for my attendance are all done so I don't need to go back." George shrugged.

"Oh. Is that good or bad?"

"It's great." George forced a smile, pulling out his laptop.

"How did you sleep last night?" Clay then asked, also pulling out his work.

"Um. I slept ok." George said. He didn't take his pills, but he knew Dream was watching him. Phil texted him to let him know about the new routine. George was angry at it, saying how Dream shouldn't have to sacrifice his sleep or anything for George. But Phil said Dream begged.

George was angry. So he didn't talk to Dream, and just faked sleep.

"I didn't take my pills so, I think I slept maybe an hour or two."

"You didn't?" Clay asked with furrowed eyebrows, looking at him.

"Nup. I'm surviving without them, aren't I?" George said. Clay frowned and brought a finger up to brush over George's eye bag.

"You look so exhausted." He said softly. George swallowed and shifted away, so Clay dropped his hand.

"I've been exhausted for ages. I'm doing fine."

Was he doing fine?

For some reason, the thought of not seeing Puffy made him feel upset. Which made no sense. Those appointments were a chore, something he was forced to do. And he couldn't even tell her anything that was *actually* important.

But now he had no one to tell *anything* to.



Everyone's phone went off at the same time in the room, and every student quickly pulled out their phones, even the teacher did.

George didn't move. He didn't want to look.

"George, can I see what the alert is? I don't have my phone, father confiscated it because I went shopping with you guys yesterday." Clay said, slightly rushed. George pulled out the phone and handed it to Clay, not even checking it.

"Shit." Clay mumbled, staring at the alert. "It's a meeting for the heroes with the Mayor." He swallowed.

George closed his eyes. *Why today?*

"Block." Mr Bell called from the front of the classroom. Everyone turned to look at Clay. Mr Bell had the phone pressed to his ear. "Your chauffeur is at the front of the school."

"What?" Clay froze.

"Your father wants you home." Mr Bell shrugged, gesturing to the phone. "Got a call from the Principle who said a woman called Tracy organised it." He said.

Clay went pale.

"Why has your father called you home?" George asked, snapping his eyes open as he looked at Clay who started packing up the stuff he just unpacked.

"Probably for the meeting with the heroes." Clay mumbled.

"He can't do that. You said GNotFound would take you out of those meetings. I thought you weren't going to be there anymore." George said with furrowed eyebrows.

"Yeah." Clay whispered, swallowing and standing up, swinging his bag over his shoulder. "I thought so too."

•

George walked into the office while trying to breathe deeply. He didn't want to be here. He wanted to go home. *No, I want to go to a rooftop and guard my home.* Yes, that's what he wanted to do. That's his job, his current purpose.

Dream didn't meet him at the park. At this point, George just assumed Dream was purposefully avoiding these meetings since he has barely shown up to any.

The Mayor was sitting in his usual seat, but George turned to look at Clay, who was staring at him with pleading eyes.

"Sit, GNotFound." The Mayor said.

George was too tired. Of everything. So he sat. He decided that the second Clay gets dragged into the conversation, he would interfere.

He was good at interfering. Any time the Mayor attacked Dream, he'd stand up for him. Attacked Clay, he would fight for him. Even when the Mayor would insult George, he would stand his ground. He refused to take any shit from a man like David Block.

"Please tell me how you managed to let four villains AND the Blade get away the other week at the school." The Mayor said.

*Good morning to you too.*

George just took a deep breath. "It was two verse five. I had used my power and was about to transform back. The Blade let the villains go before we could take their jewels. There was a lot against us, and our priority was the safety of the students and teachers, not the Blade's jewel." George said in a monotone voice.

"What is the point of you and Dream if you can't even do your one job of taking down villains? It was pathetic watching on the news, and you just let the Blade go."

"Yeah." George just simply said, wanting this to end.

"And now the city knows Blade is back. I have dozens of reporters and civilians demanding I tell them what's going on. I wanted to keep it as quiet as possible, so there wasn't chaos."

"Maybe the people should know, so they know what to expect." George said quietly.

"And that kid? The one dangled off the building the other week? You said that Dream revealed to the Blade that he cares for someone. Was that boy him?"

"Yes." George admitted.

"Tell me his name." The Mayor ordered.

"George Davidson." George said softly, not meeting the Mayor's eyes. He glanced at Clay and saw the dirty blonde lean back in his seat with a frown, anxiously watching his father.

The Mayor turned to look at his son. "Is this the George that you're friends with? The one that came over?"

"Yes." Clay said softly.

"You are not to see him again. I'm guessing the attack at the school was for him as well. That kid is putting everyone else in danger. I don't want you near him."

"But, father. He's... he's my best friend." Clay sat up straight.

"It's not negotiable." The Mayor said, turning back to George.

Clay looked at George too, with pleading eyes like he was hoping he would say something to help. George just looked away.

It was probably a good thing if Clay didn't see him. The Mayor was right, he was putting everyone in danger.

"GNotFound, you need to end this. Next time you see the Blade, you take his damned jewel. If you fail again, I will not be afraid to publicly shame you." The Mayor said.

"Alright." George sighed.

"Maybe I shouldn't even wait. I should get on the news now and tell the entire city what a complete fuckup of a hero you are, a complete screw-up of a person." The Mayor said.

"Father-" Clay wanted to step in, but was silenced by a simple hand gesture by the Mayor.

"Dream didn't even bother to show up today!" David was beginning to yell. George guessed it was because of his lack of input. It's like the mayor wanted to get a rise out of him. "And you clearly have your priorities in the wrong order. You screw up everything I ever ask you. In fact, you screw up everything you ever do. You're pathetic, and useless and a complete waste of a person. Anyone could be a better hero than yourself." His voice was booming.

George sat there and listened.

"Whoever you are as a civilian is some pathetic, forgettable nobody. You should be thankful I'm letting you keep your jewel another day. You *disgust* me, GNotFound." David yelled.

George said nothing.

Clay looked horrified. It scared him that G wasn't fighting back. It scared him that G hadn't said a word to the Mayor. He just let himself be yelled at. G just let it happen. That wasn't like him.

George just nodded and stood up.

"Yeah. Get the fuck out of my office." The Mayor laughed.

"Father, why-"

"You can shut the fuck up." The Mayor yelled at him.

Clay said no more, and George just sighed as he reached for the door handle.

He was used to no one else standing up for him.

"He really has nothing to defend himself with anymore." The Mayor continued to laugh. "Maybe he's finally realised he's as pathetic and useless as I've said. Finally listening to your Mayor."

George left without a word.

•

George wasn't sure how he ended up back here. But he was in his civilian form, back at school. He felt like a zombie, his body moving for him because his mind was busy screaming at him.

George walked the halls in a stiff silence. His face held no emotion as he made his way to where he was going. It was like he had no feelings or energy left.

He felt utterly numb.

He finally knocked on the door of an office. A faint 'come in' was heard, and he opened the door. Puffy was inside, sitting at her desk. She looked up with a pleasant, yet confused smile when he entered.

"George, you're back." She asked, standing up. Her face slowly filled with concern the longer George didn't say anything.

"I can't do it anymore." George whispered, lowering his gaze.

Puffy's kind smile fell and her eyebrows furrowed. She moved to the side of her desk.

"George?"

The boy in question collapsed onto his knees grabbing onto the wall beside him for the smallest amount of support he could find.

"I can't do it." He sobbed. "I'm so exhausted. I've lost myself. I don't even know who I am anymore."

His hands were shaking. His whole body was shaking.

"Puffy, help." He whispered.

Puffy ran forward, and grabbed his arms. George clung to her shoulders, letting his head fall as he sobbed and heaved. He's never cried this hard.

"George, it's ok. Listen to me. You are ok here. This is a safe space. What happened?" She said.

"I can't do this anymore." He sobbed again, tears streaming down his face.

"Can't do what?"

He looked up at Puffy, his big bloodshot brown eyes meeting her concerned ones. She was practically holding the boy up. He was weak, and exhausted.

"George, tell me. You can tell me." She said patiently, gripping his arms tighter. "Whatever it is, you can say it here."

George closed his eyes for a second as a big sob shook his body.

"I-"

He looked back up at her. He couldn't hold on to this secret anymore. It was literally killing him, tearing him up, destroying him. It was breaking him and the weight on his shoulders was too much to even think anymore.

"I'm GNotFound."

## Chapter End Notes

Finally. George needed someone to talk to, I felt bad for how alone I made him.

This chapter was 8k words and the rest of the chapters will probably be that length too. We have a lot happening in the next several chapters so buckle up.

Thanks for the support, as always.

Reminder: Update every Wednesday

Twitter: LottiaaT

# Prom

## Chapter Summary

Clay decides to take George to prom. But with a night filled with pining, secrets, and the constant fear of villain attacks... something was bound to go wrong.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"I'm going to do it." Nick said, shaking out his arms and breathing deep breaths. George patted him on the back.

"Yes you are." He said, with a confident nod.

"Do what?" Clay asked, appearing next to them.

"I'm asking Karl to prom." Nick said, taking another deep breath.

"Hell yeah." Clay slapped him on the shoulder, looking where Nick and George were. Karl was standing by his locker chatting with Niki. "Wait, as friends or more?"

"More. I'm obsessed with him." Nick said with zero hesitation, but was too nervous to care for Clay's reaction or thoughts.

"Good luck, dude." Clay grinned.

"What if he says no and spits on my face." Nick then turned to George with a frown.

"Shut up, Karl is the sweetest person ever. Just do it. Prom is literally tomorrow." George said, pushing Nick slightly forward.

Nick shook out his arms again and nodded.

"Ok." He took a step forward, stopped for a moment, and then continued walking.

Clay stepped closer to George as they watched him walk over.

"I had no clue he liked guys. Or Karl."

"Yeah. He told me last week. Said he doesn't really know his sexuality, all he knows is that he likes Karl." George shrugged. "And that was all that matters."

Clay smiled at that, but his smile slowly fell as his thoughts interfered. He remembered a conversation very similar to that, where he said those words to someone.

"Look!" George grabbed Clay's arm and pointed with his free hand.

Nick had pulled out flowers from his bag and handed them to Karl, who was grinning so wide. They couldn't hear what they were saying. The flowers were purple, and slightly squashed, but Karl took them with a hand covering his mouth to hide his blush and smile.

"Karl definitely likes him back." George whispered with a grin, his grip on Clay's forearm tightening as he focused on trying to hear. Clay glanced down at George with a small smile.

"What's happening?" Xavier walked up beside George and Clay.

"A promposal." George said, turning to glance at Xavier before looking back to see Karl hug Nick. George laughed. "That's a yes if I've ever seen one."

When the hug broke up, Nick turned to his friends and shot them a thumbs up and a grin. George responded with a similar wide smile and Clay let out a whoop.

"That is so cute." Xavier commented, and glanced down to see George still holding onto Clay's arm.

"Isn't it." George said, and then realised he was holding Clay's arm and immediately dropped it. "Sorry! I was focused." He blushed. Clay just looked down at him with a fond smile.

"I think Nick wants you." Clay said, gesturing back to their friend. Nick was staring at George and gesturing for him to hurry up.

"Yeah. We've got English. Sorry, I'll catch up with you later." George said to Clay, then turned to Xavier. "I'll see you at comp science?"

"Absolutely." Xavier smiled.

George jogged over to Nick, and hugged his excited friend who began spilling all the details as they walked down the hall.

"That was such a cute promposal. I'm glad that there is less stigma around being LGBTQIA+ at this school now. It feels like a much more welcoming place." Xavier said to Clay.

"Yeah. And it's changed in such a short amount of time. And although it wasn't intentional, I think George is mostly to thank." Clay said.

"I agree. Him being out and proud really started something wonderful." Xavier nodded along.

"I don't know how he does it all. He's amazing." Clay said, smiling.

Xavier glanced at him.

"He really is. Speaking of promposals. Do you know if George is going with anyone?" He asked.

Clay short-circuited.

"Oh. Um. He's going with us, like the friend group." He said.

"So not a date or anything? I mean, Nick is in your group but has a date." Xavier said curiously.

"Um. Yeah. I don't know." Clay chuckled. Xavier hummed. "Why?"

"I'm thinking of asking him to prom. Do you think he'd say yes? I know he doesn't like me romantically but I think it could still be a fun night." Xavier said, watching Clay for his reaction.

"Oh." Clay blinked. "I don't know what he'd say." Clay considered it. "Actually, I think I do know. He'd say he wouldn't want to because he doesn't want you to think it's a date and hurt your feelings."

"That's true." Xavier chuckled. "But it wouldn't be like that. And I think I could convince him."

Clay swallowed. He really did not like the idea of Xavier going to prom with George.

"Would it be an issue?" Xavier pressed, still watching Clay. "If I asked him?"

Clay looked at him.

"An issue?" He echoed back.

The bell rang and Clay took his opportunity to leave, a brief goodbye to Xavier about being late to English.

Something didn't sit right with Xavier taking George.

Maybe Clay just wanted George to himself.

•

"Nick and Karl sitting in a tree!" Skeppy changed.

"K-I-S-S-I-"

"Shut up!" Nick shoved Quackity in the hallway, but he was still smiling.

"Do you have a plan for the night? You still going with the group?" Darryl asked Nick.

"I'm picking him up, so I can't really arrive with you guys but I'll see everyone when we are there, of course." Nick said. "Is that ok?"

"What? No-" Skeppy said.

"Yes, of course it's fine, Nick." Darryl interrupted Skeppy who shot him a sour look.

"Oh so *Nick* can take a date." Skeppy said with a tone.

"Why you mad? Got someone you want to take?" George asked curiously.

"Yes I do actually. But they don't want to go with me." Skeppy raised his chin and looked away.

George was confused.

"Anyways!" Nick chimed in. "I vote we go ice skating a day or two after prom. We've been meaning to do it for ages but were waiting for a time when *everyone* could make it." Nick pointedly looked at George who felt insanely guilty again, and he looked away.

"Hey!" Clay came jogging over, ending up beside George as they walked. He seemed slightly out of breath like he was in a rush.

"You good, bro?" Nick asked. Clay nodded.

"Yes, yes I'm fine. Um. Well... er. Nevermind." Clay shook his head. George stared at him.

"What is it? You have something on your mind." He said softly for Clay to hear.

"So yeah. Ice skating after school this week? I'll let the sophomores know. Who's down?" Nick said. He got confirmation from the others, and then looked at George and Clay.

"Sure." Clay said, but still keeping his eyes on George.

"Um. I don't know yet. I think... I might be doing stuff with family." George said.

Nick sighed, and didn't say anymore about it as they walked.

"Could I talk to you privately?" Clay said to George, who was taken by surprise. He blinked but nodded, and the other three looked at them curiously.

"Meet you guys at the cafeteria." George said to the others before turning to look at Clay who was running a hand through his hair. "Right." George grabbed the hand that was messing up his hair and pulled it down. "You need to calm down, it looks like your mind is everywhere."

"Ok." Clay took a deep breath, and grabbed George's hand that was slipping away. It made George freeze for a second.

"Ok?" George said.

"Yep." Clay smiled.

Something beyond George's shoulder caught Clay's eye, and made his smile fall.

"What?" George turned to look behind him, but Clay tilted his chin back to face him.

"Will you go to prom with me?" Clay asked quickly.

George didn't react initially. He hadn't processed the words yet. And when they did process, he needed a moment to convince himself he didn't make it up.

"What?" George asked, hand slipping from Clay's grip unintentionally, but Clay just held it with both his hands.

"Go to prom with me." He relaxed slightly and smiled. "Please."

"Really?" George asked softly. Clay nodded.

"I don't have like flowers or anything but I really do want to go to prom with you." He grinned.

George blinked.

"Go to prom. Together? Like... like as..."

"As whatever you want it to be." Clay tilted his head to the side as he looked at George, some of his hair falling over his eyes and making George's heart falter even more.

*That didn't clarify anything.*

His crush was asking him to go to senior prom with him.

As friends?

It seemed like that. Like a spur of the moment, didn't want to go alone thing.

George couldn't figure out if Clay's goofy smile was genuine.

"You want to go with me?" George asked, still not able to process what was happening exactly.

"Yes I want to go with you. I love spending time with you, you're my best friend!" Clay grinned.



*There it is*  
*Best friend.*

"Sure." George forced a smile, suppressing the sigh. "I'll go to prom with you. It's not like anyone else is going to ask me."

Clay's eyes shifted behind George again.

"Can I hug you?" Clay asked, looking back at George with his smile again.

George nodded, of course, and Clay didn't hesitate to wrap him in a hug. He wheezed when he started making them both sway side to side.

"You're so weird." George hid his smile against Clay.

"That's why you love me." Clay sung and pulled away.

"We should probably go to lunch now." George's face was as red as it could be, so he turned around to avoid looking at Clay and began to walk. Clay walked beside him.

"Hey guys, long time so see." Xavier came over with a small smile and a chuckle.

"Hey." George smiled back, and Clay swallowed, nervously standing behind George. His fingers found the edge of George's shirt, so he held it subtly.

He liked it. It was sort of like he was attached to George. Even if George didn't notice the slight tugging on the back of his shirt, Clay was with him. George was *his*.

"I just wanted to ask you something, George." Xavier said, still smiling.

"Yeah?" George responded.

"Did you ever get the marks back on that comp science assignment? I haven't got the email yet." Xavier said nonchalantly.

"Oh, neither. I think he said they would come out after prom night." George said. Xavier nodded.

"That makes sense. Prom should be fun. I'll see you there, yeah?" He said.

"Yeah, definitely." George smiled back.

"Well, I have a photography club meeting, but I'll catch you guys later." Xavier said.

"Yeah, see you." George said, and Xavier gave him a wave and a smile, before walking past George. But he stopped briefly and leaned closer to Clay's ear.

"Prom's tomorrow night and you *finally* asked him. Cutting it close there, mate." Xavier said only soft enough for Clay, with a chuckle after his words.

Xavier patted him in the shoulder before continuing to walk away and Clay turned around to watch him leave.

"What." Clay whispered.

"Clay." George snapped his attention back. "I kind of need my shirt." He said with a gentle smile.

Clay grinned and held the back of the grey shirt tighter.

"No. Now walk."

George turned around yet again to avoid Clay seeing his blush, and they walked to the cafeteria, with Clay still holding his shirt. The occasional tug reminded George he was there, but it was comforting, almost.

He knew Clay was with him.

•

"Stop fussing, Mom." George shrugged her off. She just smiled and dusted off his shoulder again.

"Can I come? Please?" Lexi asked.

"It's a *senior* prom, idiot." George scoffed. He adjusted the button on his jacket. He put in a small amount of hair gel in, just enough so it wasn't his typical hair.

It was actually very similar to GNotFound's hair. But obviously a few shades lighter.

"I think outside the house is best place for a photo." Mark said, his phone already out.

"No way. That's too embarrassing. This is already bad enough." George said, checking the time on his own phone.

"We need photos, George. Did you say Darryl was picking you and the guys up?" Lorna asked.

Oh.

George's face went pink. He forgot to tell them.

Well, maybe he just didn't want to tell them.

"Actually. Um. We are meeting him there." George shifted his tie.

"We?" Lexi asked, a smile growing on her face. "You got asked out, didn't you!"

"Oh Georgie, who is it?" Lorna said. George winced.

"Clay." He mumbled.

"Did you just say Clay?" Mark grinned.

"Oh my goodness! Is he coming to pick you up? We must take photos of you both. When is he coming?" Lorna immediately bombarded him with questions.

"Stop." George whined. "Please don't make it a big deal. It's just as friends."

"Booo." Mark said and George rolled his eyes.

"Did he say it was as friends? That's stupid." Lexi said.

"Well... he didn't say exactly that." George admitted.

"What did he say?"

"He just asked me to go with him. And I said why with me and he said because he likes being

around me."

Lexi squealed.

"Because we are *best friends*, he said." George sighed.

"Ah. Well. That's ridiculous." Lexi scoffed. "He did not mean to friendzone you. There's no way. He must be an idiot."

"Whatever. He's coming in like fifteen minutes and by that time I want all of you-"

There was a knock at the door and George froze mid sentence.

"That's him! Go get the door." Lorna turned him around and pushed him gently towards the front door. Clay was early.

George began to feel sick. This was a bad idea. Not even the going with Clay part. Just the going to prom in general. Maybe the fact he was a target of the *biggest* supervillain in the country, possibly the world slipped his mind somehow. He was putting his entire cohort at risk by going. Or if there is an attack literally anywhere in the city, he has to leave anyways and transform.

The blue Sapphire rested heavy on chest, and the expectations of the city weighed even more on his shoulders.

"I change my mind." George turned around, but Lorna was there to turn him right back around.

"I don't care what is going through your mind right now. You are going to have a great night whether you like it or not."

"Now answer the bloody door." Lexi called.

George shooed his family away before finally taking a deep breath and opening the door.

Even though the extremely attractive boy in front of him made his heart race even more, somehow he felt more relaxed than his busy mind was moments prior.

Clay was here. And he felt like the weight on his shoulders was shared somehow.

"Hi." George said, the weak word barely coming out as more than a whisper.

Clay smiled down at him, a hand sweeping through his hair once.

"Hi." He said back in a similar soft tone.

George couldn't help but smile back.

"You look incredible, George. Like you always do. You look good in a suit." Clay said, gesturing to George's entire outfit.

"Thanks." He knew his cheeks were bright pink, but his smile didn't fall. "You look how I knew you would look."

"Oh?" Clay chuckled. "And is that a good thing?"

"Yes." George mumbled. "You look good, Clay."

"Thank you."

"Ok, enough chit chat. Photo time!" Mark arrived in the doorway with his camera app and a grin.

They were forced to do multiple photos. Some of George by himself, and Lorna insisted on some of Clay by himself too. And then, of course, the pair together.

"I'm sorry." George whispered as they posed for the fiftieth photo. They had an arm around each other's waists.

"Don't apologise. This is sweet. It's more than my Dad did. I didn't even see him before I left. Drista fussed, of course. It was nice. But this is fun." Clay said through a smile.

"Ok I hate this pose. Do something cuter." Lexi called out.

"Cuter?" George asked.

Clay shifted so he was slightly behind George and then put both his arms around George's arms, holding their hands against George's stomach, and then rested his chin on George's shoulder.

George malfunctioned again, tilting to look at Clay, who was smiling at him. Their faces were very close, so George quickly looked back at the camera.

"Clay is actually good at this. Another cute one!" Lexi said. George wished he could punch her.

"Stop challenging him." George said nervously.

Clay chuckled softly in George's ear, making the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. Thankfully Clay moved away.

But then Clay dipped George, with no warning, and George gasped, arms immediately grabbing Clay's shoulders. He looked up at the dirty blonde, who's hair was dangling slightly as he smiled down at George, who was still terrified.

"What the hell!" George said, but the blush on his face proved he didn't hate it.

"George got dipped like a princess." Lexi said in a teasing voice, and that was enough for George to scoff and push Clay to let him up.

When Clay stood him up straight, he quickly went in and let his lips press into George's cheek, lingering for a photo.

George held his breath.

He only breathed again when Clay pulled away.

*This was absolute torture.*

"That one was amazing, look at George's face! He's blushing!" Lorna said.

"He's blushing in every one." Mark added.

"Ok! That's enough. We are leaving now." George said, stepping away from Clay and laughing nervously.

They bid their farewells, Lorna with a kiss on each of their cheeks, and Lexi with a snarky

comment in George's ear *"how did any of that possibly seem platonic to you."*

Clay led George to his car that his chauffeur was driving. It felt more fancy than he anticipated. And when Clay opened the door for him, and George rolled his eyes.

Typical of them.

•

"About fucking time!" Quackity came storming over, crossing his arms across his chest, staring the two of them down. The boy was wearing a black suit with white shirt, but the buttons were undone, and he had suspenders holding up his pants. And of course, Quackity was still wearing his beanie, a navy blue.

"We aren't even that late." Clay said, closing the door of the car, and standing beside George. Their prom was in the city hall, right in the city centre.

"Yeah. But I had to third wheel on my way here!" He yelled.

"You went with Nick and Karl?" George asked in confusion.

"No. I went with Darryl and Skeppy! Like we had planned! No one told me you bailed." Quackity had a sour look on his face.

"That's not third wheeling, Quackity." George chuckled.

"If you were there, you would have seen it most definitely was. Can *no one* else tell that those two are dating? Or is it just me." He threw his hands in the air. "I'm going to find Wilbur. Maybe he won't ditch me." He stormed off back inside the venue.

"Are Skeppy and Darryl dating?" Clay asked.

"No? I think Quackity is just exaggerating. Darryl was the one that suggested we go as a group, why would he do that if he has Skeppy." George shrugged.

"Come on, let's go inside." Clay said, and gently put a hand on the small of George's back to guide him forwards towards the steps.

George blushed.

"Clay... I really appreciate you coming with me. But you don't have to actually be this close. People will think-"

"George, I'm here to have a good time, not think about my reputation or what people think. I want to spend the night with you." Clay said, moving the hand from George's back, to around his waist, tugging him closer. He chuckled at George's small stumble and flushed cheeks. "I get to spend the night with a beautiful boy and I'm going to show off."

"Stop." George mumbled.

Clay just smiled and kept walking with George at his side.

They entered the venue and it had been decorated to an ocean theme. The foyer had lights that were mostly blue with touches of green. There were aquatic decorations everywhere, and the music playing in the foyer was soft and calming.

There were a lot of people, all dressed in various suits, dresses, pantsuits and formal wear. Everyone in their senior cohort looked several years older all dressed up proper.

Clay let go of George's waist but took his hand instead, leading him through the foyer to the left, into the dining hall, which continued the light blue and green theme but less intense. There were lots of circular tables with nametags on each, and aquatic sculptures in the centre.

Clay took George over to a massive seating chart. They had organised the tables a few weeks ago, curtesy of the prom committee. Clay scanned the poster while George looked around.

"Oh yep. We are table 15. Down near the right." Clay said, pointing on the poster, and then looking around. George just let himself be guided towards their table.

Already sitting was Skeppy and Darryl, and when Clay and George arrived, both boys stood up to greet them. Skeppy was in a light blue suit, which coincidentally went well with the ocean theme, and his hair had been slicked back with a lot of gel. Darryl had a dark red suit, with a tailcoat.

"You both look amazing!" Darryl grinned, giving each of them a hug.

"So do you guys." George smiled back, giving Skeppy a hug as well.

"I have to admit, you both coming to prom together was somehow very expected and also very surprising at the same time." Skeppy said. Clay snuck an arm around George's waist again, catching the poor brunet off guard.

"I'm very lucky he said yes." Clay said with a goofy smile. Skeppy turned to Darryl, using his hand to point at George and Clay.

"See?" He said.

"I know, I know." Darryl sighed, and then stepped closer to Skeppy, turning to George and Clay. "Um. There's something we should tell you."

"Yeah?" George said, furrowed eyebrows.

"Me and Skeppy have been dating for a few months." Darryl said, and Skeppy grabbed his hand as if to prove it.

"What! No way." Clay laughed.

"A few months! Why didn't you tell us?" George scoffed, but a smile was on his face.

"Well, it just never came up. And everyone has been super busy with their own stuff it just didn't seem like it needed to be said." Darryl said. Skeppy rolled his eyes.

"But then Darryl was all like, *we can't go to prom together, our friends don't have dates and they'll be lonely*. Like a loser." Skeppy said.

"No." Darryl interrupted. "I said *Quackity* wouldn't have a date." He corrected him.

"Wait but Clay only asked me yesterday, and same with Nick and Karl. You suggested the group thing ages ago, how did you know?" George asked, extremely confused.

"Please." Darryl scoffed, but didn't bother to elaborate, leaving George and Clay very confused. Their conversation was cut short by Nick arriving in a loud manner as usual, thumping George on the back and whooping.

"My friends are hot!" He shouted. Karl appeared beside him, wearing a dark magenta suit jacket with black pants and white undershirt. He was smiling as he rolled his eyes at his date.

"Where's Q?" Karl asked.

"Went to find Wilbur, was complaining about third wheeling." Clay said with a chuckle.

"Oh yeah, because he ended up in the car with Darryl and Skeppy." Nick snickered, looking at the pair.

"What? Did you know they were a thing?" George asked him. Nick laughed.

"Duh. It was so obvious they were together. I literally caught them on dates multiple times. You had to have been extremely oblivious to not have noticed." He said.

George closed his mouth. He was a really shit friend.

"What time is dinner?" Quackity arrived, giving Nick and Karl a small wave in greeting.

"I think appetizers are at 7. Main course 7:30 and desert is a bit later at 9." Darryl said.

"This is dumb, I just want to go dance." Nick scoffed.

"It's a celebration for our last year. They have some speeches and stuff too I think." Karl said.

"Don't they do that at graduation?" Skeppy asked.

"Yeah but tonight they get to express how mature we are and how much we've grown and how beautiful we've become as adults." Quackity said, and then gagged.

George sighed and checked his phone. No alert. Maybe he could leave early.

No, he should listen to Puffy.

He felt a pinch in his side and turned to look at Clay who was watching him.

"Relax." He whispered. George sent him a small smile back.

"I am relaxed."

"No, you are not." Clay chuckled.

•

Dinner went as expected. They had cheese platters for appetizers, and then had a randomly allocated main course of either chicken or beef. They all spoke as if it were another school lunch break.

George didn't eat much, he didn't feel like it. His stomach was full of nerves instead. He felt uncomfortable in his suit, and it felt like it was getting warmer. He kept checking his phone, and looking around the room.

He was waiting for the nice night to be spoiled. Anything good he has always gets ruined.

Puffy was the one who convinced him to go. They'd had an extremely long chat after she told him who he was. She even had to cancel other appointments and he took the rest of the day off after his

breakdown in the middle of her office.

He told her basically everything. Apart from a few details like who L is, and obviously he didn't know who Dream was anyway. She let him explain everything and even when he would freak out about having told her, she assured him she wouldn't tell anyone.

George had the feeling she already knew. But he didn't want to find out.

It was a small weight off his shoulders. Someone who knows who he is, like Phil, but who understands him, like Dream. Puffy was perfect.

Once Clay had finished his meal, he took George's hand under the table and gave it a squeeze without looking at him.

That action alone made George's heart rate increase, but the warmth relaxed him at the same time.

"Dancing!" Nick said, getting up and dragging Karl's chair back who was in the middle of eating, and pulled him to his feet. Karl barely had time to put down his cutlery. Quackity had left earlier, and Skeppy and Darryl stood up as well.

"George, Clay, you coming?" Darryl asked.

"Maybe in a bit." George said with a small shrug. The group of four left, and Clay turned to George, rotating in his seat to put his arm on the back rest.

He smiled.

"What?" George asked him.

"You wanna dance?" Clay asked. George grimaced.

"Not particularly."

"Come on, it'll be fun." Clay said.

"I don't know how to dance." George reasoned.

"No one does. Come on." Clay stood up and held out a hand to George as invitation. George looked at the hand with the single white ring hesitantly.

"Dance with me, Georgie." Clay smiled, hand reaching closer.

George sighed, and took it, his smaller soft hand meeting Clay's slightly bigger and warmer one, and was pulled to his feet.

Still holding hands, the pair made their way out of the dining hall and through the foyer to other side, where the dance floor was.

There were a lot of people and groups and couples already dancing, and George winced at the crowd.

"I think I see Nick." George said, pointing in the distance at Nick who was blindly jumping up and down while Karl smiled at him. He noticed Darryl and Skeppy nearby.

"Yeah, but let's go over here." Clay took George a different part of the dance floor, away from their friends.



Clay let go of George's hand and grinned at him. George felt too close to the people around him.

"What now?" George raised his voice slightly to be heard.

"I don't know. Just dance." Clay started swaying slightly with his goofy smile. It was an upbeat song, George couldn't place it but it seemed like some people knew the words.

Clay started twisting his hips and had his arms out to the side. George couldn't hold back his smile at Clay's ridiculous dance moves. Clay grinned more when George started to laugh, and grabbed the brunet's arms, pulling each one closer and then back, trying to get George to twist as well.

"Come on! Dance, George." Clay said, pulling the brunet more vigorously. George was laughing at the ridiculousness of it, but gave in and let his body move the way Clay was.

No one paid them attention, everyone was doing their own thing with their own dancing and own friends and partners.

George let the music take over a moment, and couldn't contain his smile as he danced with Clay, the two of them watching each other like there was no one else around. All of his anxieties left for a few minutes, all he could focus on was the perfect smile on Clay's face, and the energy he was feeding off of.

The song changed to another upbeat one, and Clay grabbed George's hand, forcing him to spin around. It made George stumble, and trip, but Clay caught him and they both laughed. George shoved his chest with a smile.

"Don't do that, idiot." He said. Clay spun him again, and George didn't trip this time, but he scoffed.

"You are both so cute."

George was snapped out of the moment by a high pitched voice. He turned to see Violet, in a bright red dress, holding a glass, watching them. It was still quite loud, and there were a lot of people, so it was weird that she noticed them or even spoke to them.

"Clay, you look amazing!" She gushed. Clay gave her a tight-lipped smile.

"Thanks, so do you, Violet." He said politely.

"Did you guys come together?" She asked, pointedly looking at George.

"Yeah." Clay said, putting an arm across George's shoulders.

"Aw so sweet." She said, with a stunning fake smile. "Does the Mayor know about you two coming together?" She asked.

"You know me and my father aren't on good terms." Clay said with a slightly nervous smile.

"Oh, of course. Well, let's just hope he doesn't find out." She said, then gave George a look. George furrowed his eyebrows and stepped forward, pulling away from Clay.

"Would you tell the Mayor? You'd make Clay get in trouble for having a fun night with a friend?" George said, staring at her.

"Oh, of course not. I love Clay. Plus it's not like there's anything incriminating about you both dancing. I wouldn't tell the Mayor." She put a hand over her heart. "Swear on my heart." She smiled

sweetly.

"Violet, he would pull me out of school if he knew." Clay chimed in.

"I know. Of course I don't want that to happen." She said, worry in her tone. "Don't worry, babe. I won't tell anyone your secrets." She winked at him, and then raised her eyebrows at George before walking away.

George stared after her with a tense jaw.

An arm snaked its way around George's waist, turning him back around. Clay smiled.

"Don't worry about her." Clay said. George chewed on his lip, glancing back at the direction she went in.

"She'll tell your father." George said.

"No, she won't. She likes me and wouldn't want me out of school, or for me to be angry at her." He said.

"Yeah but she *doesn't* like me." George pursed his lips. Clay tried to pull him closer to dance again, but George was rigid and nervous.

"George, just chill a little. Just have fun. She's not going to do anything. She may say awful things and threaten stuff and is generally not the nicest person. But she wouldn't *actually* go through to ruin someone's life." Clay said, still trying to make George dance.

But George pulled away, face setting in slight anger.

"Wouldn't ruin someone's life?" He said with a scoff.

A slow song started playing, and Clay reached for George. But George took another step back.

"I don't get why you're upset. It's me who will be in trouble if father finds out. And he won't, because she wouldn't do that. She's not that awful." Clay said calmly.

"Have you not pieced together who outed me yet!" George raised his voice. He then took a deep breath and tensed his jaw, looking away. "Maybe she wouldn't ruin your life, but she sure as hell did mine."

He turned around and walked away, off the dance floor and through the mass of standing people to leave the room.

He wanted some fresh air, but didn't want to go out the front of the city hall, so he went through the foyer towards the back, where there was a large courtyard with well-maintained grass and a couple of pavilions. It had a large flower garden, and also a bridge over a pond with stone pathways to other parts of the building.

George clenched and unclenched his fists as he walked to the bridge. There were a few other students out here, mostly couples wanting some space.

He leaned against the small railing but didn't look down at the pond. He was angry. Angry that Clay was oblivious enough to assume the best in people.

"George."

He sighed and glanced to his right, where Clay's presence made itself known.

"That's my name." He replied dryly. Clay frowned.

"Violet was the one who outed you to the school?" He asked softly. George nodded stiffly, turning to look away. He could see a couple slow dancing in the pavilion, the soft music from inside the building just reaching the courtyard.

"How do you know it was her? Why haven't you done anything?" Clay asked. He knew Violet had certain opinions on being gay, but he didn't expect her to out someone.

Clay's memory went to the fight with the villain who was taking voices. G had said he found out why the villain was targeting Violet. *She said that Violet threatened to expose her to the school. And she was cruel to someone who was outed.*

The villain was Niki, who came out as bisexual. Why did it not click that Violet threatened her? And why did he rule out Violet being the person who outed George?

"She overheard me telling Nick that I told my parents. And she spread it across the school. I knew it was her. I didn't want to cause more of a scene than the whole thing already was. Everyone's sort of moved on from then, and I didn't want her to make me a bigger target. So I just didn't say anything." George said with a shrug, tracing the wood on the bridge.

"I'm so sorry." Clay said. "I didn't know she did that. If you had told me-"

"You would have done something about it, I know. That's why I didn't tell you." George sighed.

"I'm going to go find her." Clay said, standing up straight and turning around. George grabbed his sleeve, but Clay kept walking and he jogged to keep up.

"No. Clay. Please, don't. She'll just get more mad." George pleaded. Clay's hands were in fists and his eyebrows were knitted together.

"Someone needs to put her in her place." He said. They were getting closer to the entrance.

"No! Clay, please. She'll retaliate. She'll tell your father you took me to the prom. You said he would be angry." George said.

Clay hesitated for just a moment, but then kept walking.

George threw his hands in the air, a sound of frustration through his teeth.

"Think it through, Clay! Stop being impulsive! Just stop and think about the consequences. Please." George said from behind the dirty blonde, who stopped.

*Impulsive.*

Clay didn't move for a minute, and George was growing more and more frustrated.

"I don't care about the consequences. She-"

"God, you're just like Dream!" George exclaimed.

That made Clay's hands unfold, his chin rise, and his blood run cold. He turned around to see George storming away, brushing a hand through his hair.

"Damn it." Clay muttered, quickly going after George again.

George walked to the flower garden, with plants and flowers and vines growing tall enough that he could pretend he was hiding away from people and noise.

He wanted to grab a flower and scrunch it up, but they too pretty and innocent for that.

He took a few deep breaths, listening to the distant music, until he felt that familiar presence behind him. He clicked his jaw.

"I'm like Dream?" Clay said. George now wanted to scrunch up Clay's face in frustration.

George didn't respond, he walked through the flower garden, feeling the boy behind him.

"Impulsive. Do you not like that he's impulsive?" Clay asked softly. George closed his eyes for a second. It really felt like Dream was talking to him.

"Only when his impulsiveness hurts him." He simply replied, staring at some large blue flowers he didn't care enough to identify.

A hand reached out in his eyesight and picked the blue flower off the bush, and George spun around.

"You can't do that, Clay." He said, meeting the bright eyes of the boy, who just had a small smile on his face.

Clay's hand lifted, the blue flower in his hold. His eyes trained on the right of George's face, and he carefully threaded the flower into the hair above his ear, being gentle as he tucked it against him.

George just stared at Clay, frozen as the flower was tucked behind his ear. Clay's small smile was still on his face as he did, and when he finished, he lowered his hand.

"Beautiful." Clay mumbled, eyes flicking back to George's.

George knew he was pink. His heart was beating out of his chest. If Clay knew what he was doing-

"I'm sorry about Violet outing you, George. And I'm sorry for not knowing, and for ignoring you just now. I just hate seeing you hurt." He said softly. "I just want to protect you. But it can get in the way of my judgement."

"It's ok." George whispered, frozen because he was scared something would happen if he moved.

The soft music from inside was still filtering out here, and Clay must have noticed it.

"Dance with me." Clay said, his hands coming to rest on George's waist.

"What?" George asked, eyes still on Clay's face.

"Dance." He said, using his hands to gently grab George's and pull them so they were resting on his shoulders. George didn't know what to do with his hands now they were on Clay, but the dirty blonde just returned his hands back to his waist.

"I told you I can't dance." George said, swallowing. Clay started to sway, hands making George follow.

"I don't care."

"I'll mess up."

"*I've got you.*" Clay pulled George closer, and George let his hands fold behind Clay's neck.

Clay moved George around the flower garden, the both of them stepping and turning softly and carefully. Just the two of them.

*Something bad is going to happen.* George hated moments like these. They were always interrupted. He could never have anything nice.

"You're so special, George." Clay whispered. George's face was burning, but he couldn't bring himself to look away from Clay's bright green eyes.

"Special?" He repeated. Dream had called him special too. He hated how his heart reacted to the word. He wasn't special. He was George.

"So special." Clay somehow pulled him closer as the music faded away. He had his eyes locked with George's and a content smile on his face.

One of Clay's hands let go of George's waist and rose to his face, his index finger brushing along his jawline, tracing up to his ear.

George felt the burning trail it left behind, like Clay was carving into his face with a hot knife.

Clay examined the boy's freckles that were scattered on his cheeks. He had a few more on side than the other. His thumb brushed his cheek bone, and rose to touch gently on the eye bags that George always wore.

"Clay." George whispered. He swallowed. "What are you doing?"

"Just looking." Clay whispered back, eyes trailing on every detail of his face, thumb following, with its burning trail.

George was pretty. He's known this for a year. But he couldn't find a single fault, not even his eye bags.

Clay's hand shifted to the side of his face again, cupping his jaw, thumb tracing his cheek. George's paler and smaller hand lifted as well to rest over the top of Clay's. Their heartbeats became one.

Clay leaned in, hovering over George, their breaths mingling and noses nearly brushing.

There was a small moment of hesitation from Clay, enough time for George's thoughts to whip around his brain at the speed of light. Enough for him to second guess every decision that lead here.

At the first hint of Clay brushing their lips together, just close enough for zap of emotion, as if a spark ignited, George pulled back, eyes wide. His hand tightened over Clay's in reflex, but he took a small step back.

"George?" Clay whispered, one hand still on George's waist, the other still lightly on his cheek. George let the hand around Clay's neck fall, as he stared at the dirty blonde with a pale face and wide eyes.

"You like someone else." George said, eyes glued to Clay's. He let the hand resting over Clay's fall, but Clay kept his hand right where it was, almost gripping tighter to the shorter boy's face.

Clay's face fell at those words, eyebrows furrowing and pink cheeks quickly growing pale.

"I can explain." Clay grimaced.

He didn't deny it.

George took a step back, and Clay's hand fell by his side. Clay looked heartbroken.

"George, no. Wait." He said as George took another step back. He followed the step.

"You don't even like me. Why would you do that. Why would you try to ki-" He couldn't finish the sentence, it felt like his throat was closing up.

"No, no." Clay reached for George, grabbing both his hands and pulling them towards him.

"George, I do like you. I like you so much."

"You like someone else. A girl." *You like two people.*

Clay's pained face explained enough, but George waited for the words.

"So why would you do that?" George asked.

"I hate secrets." Clay whispered. "I hate them so much. I can't keep it to myself, it hurts too bad, I keep too many already."

"But you like someone else. Why do you like someone else? Why were you going to kiss me." George's eyes were stinging.

"I don't know." Clay whispered, and George pulled his hands away at that, and didn't let Clay grab them again even when he reached out. "No, you don't understand. Yeah, I... I like you both. But it makes no sense to me, I can't explain it, I don't understand it."

"You don't *like* me. You just can't *get* the other person." George's jaw tensed. "I'm easier."

"That's not it, George." Clay said, a sour taste in his mouth. He didn't know what it was, really. He felt confused all the time and torn constantly.

"Then what is it?" George said softly, holding his own arms like he was hugging himself. He felt like he could cry any second.

"I know I like *you*. Isn't that enough?" Clay stepped forward again, and George stepped back. "It's enough for Nick to like Karl."

"It's not enough for me." George whispered. Clay kept reaching, and George kept pulling away.

"I can make it enough. I like you so much, George. Do you like me too?" Clay asked.

And George's eyes finally welled up with tears.

He had to lie yet another time, about another one of his biggest secrets, to yet another of the most important people in his life.

"No." He choked out. "You know I like someone else." A tear ran down his cheek and he quickly brushed it away with the back of his hand, eyes now falling to the ground.

He won't allow himself anything good that he could lose. He couldn't lose Clay, couldn't let him get hurt. And Clay *would get hurt*.

He had to lie.

Clay felt himself tearing up too. That's the second person to tell him that. The second boy he loves to reject him.

"Who?" Clay pressed, clenching his jaw so tight to hold back his tears.

"I'm not telling you." George said, wiping another tear.

"It's a boy, you're friend, someone who likes a girl. You've liked them for a year. If it's not me, then tell me who, *please*." Clay begged.

George shook his head, hugging himself tighter.

Why do people keep doing this? First Dream, then Xavier, now Clay. He's loved Clay for so long, but... but what? When did it change? Since when did Clay like boys, let alone George?

*What am I doing?*

*The boy I love tried to kiss me and I told him I don't like him.*

But George knew Clay loved someone else. In fact, he knew Clay loved two people. GNotFound found that out. He just had no idea that one of the people was... him.

George knew he couldn't have anything nice. Everything and everyone in his life gets hurt. Or they hurt him. Or maybe they will leave. Not only is Clay wrong about liking George, but he loves someone *else*.

And George knew that even if he was the only boy Clay liked, and he confessed just now as he did. George would still not date him, or kiss him, or tell him he loved him.

Because his life was too exhausting and dangerous to drag anyone he cared about into it. He couldn't be there for Clay. He couldn't even be himself most of the time. That's not someone you can love.

He couldn't do that to Clay.

So George had to put an end to whatever was happening.

"I have to go." He whispered, and went to walk away, but Clay grabbed his arm. George didn't turn to look at him.

"George. You need to help me, I'm so confused all the time. You're just like the other person I like and it's hurting my brain and heart so much. I know I can't like you both. I know that's not fair to either of you, but I don't know what to do. I'm so confused all the time. All I know is that I like you, isn't that enough?" Clay said, not bothering to wipe his eyes. He couldn't lose George. He couldn't. Things with GNotFound were still tense. He couldn't lose George, couldn't lose the one person that makes every *complicated* and *evil* thing, somehow simple and sweet.

"I can't lose you." Clay begged. "You mean too much to me to lose."

George felt his heart break at that.

He feels like he's lost everything already.

Losing Clay would just be another thing on an already long list. Like his sleep. And his friendships. And his family. And his goals. And his name. And his freedom. And his life.

"Thanks for taking me to prom." George whispered, pulling away without looking back. Clay let him step away, hand still hovering in the air.

"George." Clay pleaded.

"Goodnight, Clay."

And he walked away, leaving the dirty blonde in the garden, along with the confusion and lies and heartbreak left behind.

The blue flower fell from his ear.

## Chapter End Notes

A confession

FINALLY

I was originally going to have a massive villain attack and an identity reveal in this chapter but I changed my mind. I thought I was piling on the drama too high... so you've all got a little bit more time to prepare yourselves.

Oh boy it's picking up

The angst is just growing and growing

Delicious.



# I let you down

## Chapter Summary

Clay begs George to come over to his house so they can talk through what happened at Prom. It doesn't quite go to plan

## Chapter Notes

TW// graphic death threat, homophobia slurs, homophobia

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay sat outside the school on a bench with his backpack beside him and head in his hands. He heard the bell ring for the start of class but he couldn't bring himself to get up.

He didn't want to see George yet.

Thank god there was no alert, Clay would not have been in the best mindset for fighting a villain.

He still didn't have his phone, it had been confiscated by the Mayor the other day because he went shopping with George, Nick and Lorna. So he couldn't call or text George last night after prom.

So he went to visit him, to guard him as Dream, but George wasn't home last night either. It was mildly terrifying. And he was slightly hurt that George didn't even want to talk to Dream. Maybe it was for the best.

"Clay." He heard someone call his name, and he suppressed a groan to look up. Xavier was walking towards him with knitted eyebrows in confusion but a small smile on his face.

"Hi." Clay said, also confused why the blonde was approaching him. Xavier stood in front of him, looking down at Clay who looked a little bit of a mess. His hood from his hoodie was over his messy hair, he had darker eye bags under his eyes and his leg was bouncing like crazy.

"How was prom with George? I didn't get to talk with you both, but I saw you on the dance floor. You seemed really close." Xavier asked.

Clay let his chin fall onto his hand resting on his non-bouncing knee.

Xavier's eyebrows furrowed at Clay's response, and he sat down beside him.

"You alright?"

"I tried to kiss George." Clay said.

Xavier's eyebrows shot to the sky and his jaw dropped. He was about to say something, but the fact that Clay said *tried* made him hesitate.

"Did it go badly?" He asked in confusion.

"You could say that." Clay scoffed. "He didn't kiss me and he left."

"Why would he do that?" Xavier muttered. George liked Clay. He was the boy he liked over Xavier.

"He likes someone else." Clay sighed. "And also, the past few months I've been telling him that *I* like someone else. A girl. And um, when I was about to kiss him, he brought it up."

Xavier winced.

"I'm an awful person." Clay shook his head. He didn't want to cry again. At how awful he was, how stupid he is. He might have lost George. "I like them both." He whispered.

"Who is the other person you like?" Xavier asked. Clay swallowed.

"I don't want to say. Um. She... goes to another school anyways." He shrugged.

"So you like boys and girls?" Xavier asked with a small smile. Clay nodded. Even though the other person he liked was GNotFound, it wasn't necessary to change his lie.

"Yeah. I'm bi."

Xavier patted him on the shoulder.

"I'm guessing you haven't told many people. So I feel like I need to tell you that you're valid, Clay. And accepted by so many even if they don't know yet." He said. Clay sent him a small smile.

"Thanks." He then cleared his throat. "But yeah, so I fucked things up with George. He hates me now. And the other person doesn't like me either and I don't know what to do."

"Why do you like them both?" Xavier asked.

"I don't know. They are both different but at the same time... so so similar. Like sometimes I think they are the same person." He paused.

No, he can't let his fantasies interfere with reality. He knows George isn't GNotFound. He knows that for certain. George doesn't have any time to be a hero, he's preoccupied with school and his family and trying to fix his sleep and mental health. And he has been in so many crosses with villains. GNotFound would just transform.

And he knows George and GNotFound are different people. They know each other, they are friends. And Clay has seen them together.

He paused at that last part.

Had he?

He tried to recall when he had seen them together.

"I know George must be upset, but you know he could never hate you." Xavier said.

"He can and he does. He told me that he likes someone else. Which I honestly should have considered before I tried to kissed him. He's told me he likes someone, I just never knew who it was so I let myself think that maybe it was me. But no, it's not." Clay ran a hand down his face in frustration.

Xavier leaned back in his seat, looking at Clay.

"I think George just has a lot going on his life at the moment and he wasn't ready for you throwing in that curveball. I think he likes you, Clay." Xavier said. Clay glanced at him.

"He doesn't like me."

"Whatever you say." Xavier raised his hand in defence. "But seriously, I think George is just overwhelmed by a lot and you on top of that may have been too much."

"You're right about that. With all the villains after him and stuff." Clay said.

"Wait." Xavier sat up straight. "Villains after him?"

Clay furrowed his eyebrows.

"Did George not tell you-"

"No. He didn't. What do you mean? I know he was in that one attack on the building and he hurt his hand. You're telling me the villains are *after* him. Why?"

Clay blinked. He assumed George and Xavier were closer than this.

"Oh. I don't know. Uh. But..." Clay paused and stared at Xavier. "Wait. Didn't you know about the theme park attack?"

"Yeah? Of course, it was on the news. You and your friends got attacked. George wasn't there though, right?" He said.

Now Clay was extremely confused.

"George called you. In the car after it happened. He was there and was nearly hurt." He said slowly.

"What? I didn't even know George went. And I've never called him in my life, only texted." Xavier said.

Clay felt his heart stop beating.

"So he lied? Who was he calling then?" Clay faced forward. Why did George lie?

"I'm sorry, but I'm not sure." Xavier said, biting his lip.

Clay put both his hands on his head on top of the hood. *What else has George lied about.*

"I'm sorry, but I have to go to class. I have photography now and Seb is mad at me but we have a project for it together. He took the camera the past week while he was sulking." Xavier said with a sigh. "Like a child."

"That's fine. I have an appointment with Puffy now anyways." Clay sighed. "And why is Seb mad at you?" Clay asked, not entirely sure who Seb is.

"Well." Xavier blushed slightly. "He um, he sort of likes me but I don't like him like that. I had my eyes on someone else for a while as well, so he's pretty pissed."

"Oh. That's not your fault though, he shouldn't be angry." Clay said, but he paused. He recalled

when he told G he liked him, and was rejected.

He reacted badly that time.

He reacted with anger initially to GNotFound. He's learnt how to handle heartbreak better than that. He's grown up a little.

To George, he wasn't angry. He was more upset. But he would never take it out on him.

"I need to fix things with George." Clay sighed, standing up. "He clearly doesn't trust me as much as I thought." He said with a pained expression. Xavier stood up too.

"He does trust you. He adores you, Clay. I'm sure you'll realise it soon."

"Thanks, Xavier. And... I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone about this... or about my... you know, sexuality." He said nervously.

"Of course not, Clay. Outing people is never ok. It was awful of Violet to do that to George." Xavier said sincerely.

Clay blinked.

"Did *everyone* know it was Violet, except me?"

•

George had to participate in gym. His excuses had run dry, he had to play volleyball.

But that wasn't what was stressing him out the most. It was the fact that he would have to see Clay in this class. Nick was here, and noticed pretty quick how subdued George was, but chose not to comment on it. It felt like Nick knew something happened last night at prom, but knew better than to pester George about it for now.

But Clay didn't show up to gym. And it did nothing to ease George's nerves.

He was dead on his feet so Nick basically dragged him to English. Darryl, Skeppy and Quackity all were discussing their nights at prom.

"And George? Where did you go, we didn't even see you or Clay for dessert." Skeppy said.

"Oooo." Quackity giggled. "Maybe they were having their *own* dessert." He wiggled his eyebrows. "Were you making out in the bushes."

George stood up and left the classroom after that, not giving a second glance to any of his friends.

His feet took him to front office, and he asked the receptionist if Puffy was free.

"She's in an appointment now and it's run overtime but they should be finishing up soon. Take a seat." She said.

George obliged, fiddling with his hands and fingers as he waited anxiously. He didn't know what to do. At all.

After another ten minutes, the door to her office opened, and George looked up hoping to be called in.

Clay walked out, with slightly red eyes, and he immediately made eye contact with George. Puffy

emerged a moment later and looked between the two. She gently put a hand on Clay's shoulder and moved him out of the doorway, then smiled at George.

"George?" She called him. He grabbed his backpack and looked away from Clay as he walked towards her. Clay clenched and unclenched his fists as he fought his impulsiveness.

"George-" He started, but George walked past him.

Before he could close the door, Clay grabbed his arm, making him turn around. So much for controlling his impulses.

"Look, can we please talk? Not right now, but later? I need to fix things and I can't lose you."

George chewed on his lip, not looking at Clay.

"After school. Come to my house." Clay said. George looked up then knitted eyebrows.

"Your house?"

"Sneak in the window. Please." Clay begged.

Puffy stood next to George and gave Clay a small smile.

"Clay, you need to get to class now." She said gently. Clay let go of George's arm and took a step back with a nod, not taking his eyes off George.

"George, please."

The door shut between them, and George turned to Puffy with watery eyes. She sighed, and gestured for him to sit.

"I know what happened. But I want to hear your reasoning." She said, grabbing her iPad. George dumped his bag and sat on the beanbag, head in his hands.

"He loves someone else, Puffy." He whispered, barely holding back tears. "He likes someone who isn't me."

"I know." She said in a soft voice.

"Do you know who?" He looked up.

She gave him a sad smile.

"I do."

•

Clay paced nervously in his room after school. He was waiting for George to come, even though he never got a confirmation the boy would arrive at all.

He told Puffy he likes GNotFound. He didn't tell her any more than that. He just told her he's been crushing on the hero because he always steps in for him. And he clarified that G was the one he confessed to and he didn't say it back.

Puffy didn't seem confused at all. She just nodded as he spoke, as if it was perfectly reasonable for him to have a crush on a superhero who he has spoken to only a few times (as Clay). But he was

thankful she was understanding.

He told her he also liked George. And what had happened last night at prom. She listened with no judgement, and tried to convince him he wasn't an awful person for loving two people.

*"It just means your heart is big. You are not a bad person, Clay. You will figure things out eventually, and you will see that."*

There was a creak outside his window, and he immediately ran to it, looking out. George was standing on the edge of the building, right next to the window, looking away.

"George?" Clay said, and it made the brunet gasp and nearly lose his footing. Clay instinctively reached out to grab him, but George caught his balance. "Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you." He said quickly.

*"It's fine. I was just..." Contemplating why I am even here.*

Clay helped him inside, and George took a few steps back, as if trying to make sure there was space between them. He didn't look at Clay, just at the ground.

They were silent for several moments.

"I'm not allowed to be here." George said. He meant it more than just beyond Clay's typical house rules. At the meeting with Mayor, David had told Clay he wasn't allowed to speak with George. Obviously he didn't stick to that.

"Well. No one has to know. There aren't cameras on the way you came in. There's no way father will find out." Clay said.

"I don't want to be a secret." George said softly.

"Do you want to sit?" Clay said, gesturing to the couch. George looked at it, then shook his head.

"Look, I have some things I need to do." George said, holding his own hand in an endearing habit Clay always noticed.

"Ok. Um. Look, George." Clay took a deep breath. "The first thing I want to say is that I really, really do like you. I want to clarify that. You aren't a second option or a backup, or anything at all. I really just adore you so much." Clay began by saying, needing to say the most important things first.

George swallowed. This was so much.

"You like... you like guys?" George asked.

Clay shifted on his feet, nervously twisting his ring.

"Yeah. I'm... I'm bisexual." He said. George finally looked him in the eyes.

"I'm sorry I assumed otherwise." He said softly. Clay just shrugged.

"It's fine, I didn't want people to know, so. Um. Anyways, that's not important." He sat against the arm of the couch. "I do like someone else, they-"

"A girl." George said. Clay slowly nodded.

He couldn't tell George who it was, so there was no point in correcting him.

"Yeah. Um. I've liked them for a while, even thought they don't like me. But I like you as well and I feel like a horrible person for it but I don't know how to control it or fix it or make it up to you but I know I can't just get rid of my feelings that quick for either of you because you are both so amazing and-"

"Clay." George interrupted, allowing him to take a breath. "Slow down, please."

"Sorry. I just... I know it's wrong and it's not fair to you or to hi-her. I don't know what's wrong with me. I feel like my brain is torn in two. But my heart just... it yearns the same and I don't understand it. Maybe if I did understand, I could give you the explanation you deserve but I truly just don't know what's wrong with me." Clay swallowed the lump in his throat.

He sat down on the armrest of the couch.

George let him speak.

"I shouldn't have tried to kiss you. I forgot you told me you liked someone, I think maybe I hoped it was me. But I know you don't like me and that's ok."

"Doesn't that make your decision easier?" George asked, kicking his foot on the carpet.

"What?"

"Me or her. I like someone else, so..." He swallowed. "That makes things easier for you to decide." George shrugged to hide the pain on his face.

"No. No, it doesn't at all. I can't just not like you. You're George. You're incredible and beautiful and stubborn and a genius, and you care for everyone, you help me through panic attacks, you understand my family, you understand *me*. I can't just switch off my feelings."

George couldn't control the blush on his face. Or the tears welling in his eyes again. He had always dreamt of Clay saying these things in a way that was more than friends. But this situation was far from ideal.

"Just because you like someone else, doesn't stop me from liking you. The same thing with... her. She told me she likes someone else, but-"

"But then you started liking me and you tried to kiss me because things *did* actually change, Clay. You tried to choose me." George's voice was growing stern but wobbly at the same time.

Clay looked up, fear in his eyes.

"No. No, that's not it." Clay stood up.

"Then what is it? You tried to kiss me. Was that supposed to... what? Get rid of your feelings for her?"

"No, but-"

"Oh, so you tried to kiss me while you still liked someone else."

"George-"

"You didn't use to like me. Not before you were rejected by her. What changed? Was it because I came out? Oh look, this guy is one of the only gay people I know, he's my friend, we get along, I choose him. Maybe he will fall for me." George was growing angry.

"No!" Clay yelled, wiping his eyes in frustration. He stepped closer to George. "George, I *know* I'm an awful person, I *know* I shouldn't like you both. But it *hurts*." Clay's voice broke. "Nothing makes any sense, my brain is fucking with me and my heart is making me do stupid things. I can't figure out what's wrong with me. But something is wrong. I don't understand. Kissing you..." Clay sat back down and put his head in his hands.

George was in pain.

"I know you didn't want it. And I'm sorry." He said softly.

George's lip trembled as he held back his words.

*No.*

*It was everything I've ever wanted.*

They were silent.

It began to rain outside.

"All I know is that I like *you*. And it's the only thing keeping me from going insane." Clay looked into George's eyes.

They were both heartbroken.

The door to the room slammed open, and they both jumped in fright.

Mayor Block stood there with pure fury on his face, and something in his hand.

"What the fuck is going on in here!" He yelled, his voice making both boys jump. Clay stood up again, and took a step back. George stayed where he was.

The Mayor's eyes landed on George.

"You!" He seethed. George didn't respond. What was he supposed to say?

"I'm s-sorry, he was leaving soon-" Clay began to say.

"You're the f\*ggot that's manipulating and corrupting my son!" He yelled, stepping into the room. George didn't budge.

"What?" He said.

"First you dare enter my home with a villain's target on your back, putting us in danger! And now you're trying to corrupt my son, turning him into a fucking queer as well!"

"I would never put your family in danger and I would never try to corrupt Clay." George swallowed, and wiped his eyes that were still damp from the conversation he was just having.

"Then what is this!" The Mayor threw a photo onto the ground, and George looked at it. Clay did



too. "Clay, did I not give you direct orders to stay away from this fucker!" He pointed at Clay and gestured to George, but they both just stared at the photo in shock.

It was an image of them in the flower garden, slow dancing. George's jaw dropped in horror and Clay grew somehow paler.

"Who took that?" George whispered.

The Mayor walked forward and grabbed George by his sleeve, yanking him forward and making him gasp in shock.

Clay immediately ran and pulled George away, stepping between them.

"Get this fucking f\*g out of my house, NOW CLAY!" He all but screamed, pointing a finger in Clay's face, who froze.

Clay didn't move an inch.

George swallowed and moved around him to the left.

"I'll leave." George said quietly. The Mayor rounded on him.

"I'm going to get that fucking school to expel you, and ruin any chance you have at going to college. You'll be kicked to the streets, nowhere to go." He threatened.

George's eyes were wide in horror. He couldn't do that.

The Mayor took another step forward.

And George finally took one back.

He'd never stepped down from the man in front of him, but he felt small now. He wasn't GNotFound, he was George. *And George was never as strong as the hero.*

"You are the fucking scum of the earth. Gay people should be given the death penalty. You don't deserve to live and breathe on the same planet as the rest of us." He advanced again, and George shrunk back.

George looked at Clay, who looked horrified and sick.

But Clay didn't move.

"If you don't get out of my house in the next minute, I'll hunt you down myself and shake you until your braindead, shoot you until you've bled out and chuck your body into the ocean where no one will ever come looking for you again."

George was lost for words. He felt sick. And terrified. He hadn't felt fear in a while, but the vile man in front of him was worse than the villains he fought.

He felt alone and threatened and weak and powerless. And he didn't know what to do or say in response. He was tired of sticking up for everyone. No, for sticking up for himself. He was exhausted.

He looked to Clay.

Maybe it was wishful thinking, that maybe the boy would interrupt. George's faith in people had

decreased drastically the past year. He was left fighting for everyone, that it seems everyone forgot they could do it too. The police stopped trying, civilians stopped caring.

Dream could never get a word out to defend G.  
And Clay couldn't do the same.

George couldn't blame him. His father had conditioned him as such.

But it still hurt when his best friend, the boy he loved, the boy who claimed to love him... said nothing. Said absolutely nothing as George was yelled at and threatened.

George looked away from Clay, letting his head fall against the wall that he had somehow ended up against and he closed his eyes for a moment.

Clay had never hated himself more than in that moment.

"Call him a f\*g, Clay." The Mayor ordered. George didn't react, just braced himself for it.

"No." Clay's voice cracked.

"Say it."

The Mayor turned to look at his son, and George took his chance. He dodged around the Mayor and sprinted to the door.

He didn't look back. He didn't want to look at Clay.

He didn't want to see the guilt on his face. He knows Clay would have wanted desperately to defend him, and he knows that he was probably just as terrified as George.

But it still hurt.

Because no one has ever stood up for George.

•

He couldn't be GNotFound yet, it was Wednesday and he had to pick his sister up from swimming. She didn't question why he was quiet when he did. Or why his eyes were red. He was thankful.

When they got home, Lorna arrived back from her late weekly meeting and gave them both hugs. Maybe she also noticed, but the whole family saw how quiet he was in the morning, they probably assumed correctly that something bad happened at prom. And they were patient enough to see if George would talk to them about it.

They should have learnt by now George doesn't just *confide* in people.

He didn't think he could handle being GNotFound right now. Hanging onto George, like Puffy told him, was important in times like this when he felt overwhelmed or anxious or lonely. Being someone else with no one around would make his mental health worse.

So he listened to her.  
And he didn't transform.

It was pouring outside now, and George hated it. He hated the rain. He's had several villain fights in it and it makes everything messy and cold and an added stress.

His Mom was making him help cook dinner. He knew she just wanted to keep him out of his room, and maybe that was a good thing.

He had been home for a few hours after his talk with Clay and his conflict with the Mayor.

"How did Nick look at prom? Did he wear that gold watch his Dad bought for him?" Lorna asked George as he stirred in the pasta.

"Um. Yeah, I think so." He said quietly.

"Did everyone else look amazing? I bet they did. Please tell me you got some photos."

"We got some selfies I think." He said.

"And Clay? How were things with him?" She asked carefully. George sighed, closing his eyes for a second.

"It was fine."

"Yeah?" She said. George nodded and then put down the spoon he was using.

"Could you please go set the table?" Lorna asked, sensing he needed a break from cooking. He nodded and grabbed out four plates.

He walked into the dining room and a loud snap of thunder echoed from outside. He was reminded of Sappnap's power. His lightning bolt was always very harsh and close though, at the same time as the sound. Normal lightning was sudden, yes, but accompanied by thunder that always came a second or two later. The warning was nice.

Thunder he was fine with.

But a loud knocking on his door was the thing that made him jump.

"Can you get that, George." Lorna called.

"Ok." He said back, placing down the last plate and walking down the hall. He sighed. If this was the Blade, he wouldn't even be that annoyed.

He didn't bother checking before opening the door. His thought process was why would the Blade or a villain *knock*. He didn't even consider why *anyone* would be knocking during a thunderstorm.

When he opened the door, his eyes immediately grew wide as he recognised the boy in front of him.

"Clay?" He breathed. The dirty blonde looked up. His hair was plastered to his face, the rain running down his body and his soaked clothes. He was shaking from the cold, but kept his arms by his sides as he looked at George. His lip, nose and eyebrow were *bleeding*, the red mixing with the water as it travelled down his face.

George immediately grabbed his hands and pulled him in, shutting the door behind with his foot. He brought a hand up to Clay's face, cupping his cheek as he checked his injuries. He shoved away all of their issues.

Clay was hurt.

"What happened?" George asked immediately, concerned for his bleeding, freezing friend. There was still a fair bit of blood flowing on his face. Clay just looked at him with big eyes, but they

squinted shut as he sobbed, and he jumped forward, onto George.

George stumbled from the weight he wasn't expecting, as Clay threw his arms around George and pressed his head against his shoulder. George immediately reacted, bringing his arms around the freezing boy, and rubbing his back.

"It's ok, you're ok. *I've got you.*" He said soothingly into his ear. Over the top of Clay's shoulders, George saw his Mom appear. Lorna looked extremely concerned. "Mom, can you get a towel and a blanket?" He said. Lorna nodded, walking out of the room.

"Clay, what happened? You're scaring me." George asked, still rubbing his back. He felt a lot of Clay's weight on him, like his legs were giving out.

"I... I didn't know wh-where else to go." Clay, a sob escaping his lips as his teeth chattered.

"It's ok. You're safe here. How did you get here." George said, trying to lift his head again, but Clay kept it firmly pressed into his shoulder.

"Walked." He mumbled. George's eyes went wide.

"You walked? From your house to mine? In the storm?" He asked. Clay let out a sob again.

"I'm so sorry, George." Clay whispered. George shushed him immediately. "I let you down."

"It's ok. What happened, Clay? What happened after I left?" He asked, but Clay didn't respond. George could hear his teeth chattering near his ear. Lorna reappeared in the room. She made eye contact with George, holding up the towel and multiple blankets, before putting them on the couch. George mouthed her a thank you before she left.

"Come on, let's move over here and get you warmed up." George said softly, unhooking one arm so he could see better. Clay still clung onto him, shivering as he let George guide him to the couch.

George reached for the towel and had to separate from Clay for a moment, who stood there, still crying and shaking. He looked weak, and kept his hands on George's shoulders to steady himself. George pulled the towel around Clay, letting it fall across his shoulders and wrapped it around him.

"Do you want some new clothes?" George asked. Clay shook his head. George noticed his lip and eyebrow had stopped bleeding, but his nose was still bleeding slightly. He used a corner of the towel to dab some of the blood away, and Clay let him, closing his eyes.

George looked down at Clay's feet, and saw his shoes still on.

"Let's at least get you some new socks." He said, but Clay shook his head and pulled George in for a hug again, clinging to his shirt. George slowly rubbed his back, trying to calm him down.

What happened after he left?

What did he miss?

George gently pulled Clay to the couch with him. Clay didn't let go, still pressing his face against George's shoulder. "Do you want to tell me what happened? Do I need to call someone?" George asked.

Clay shook his head.

"Where's Drista? Is she ok?" George asked. Clay nodded.

"Ok. That's good." George said, not knowing what to do from here. "Do you want to lie down? You can put your head in my lap." He said. Clay responded by pulling his legs onto the couch and hugging George around the middle, pressing his face against George's stomach.

"Is that comfortable?" George said, no more than a whisper, hands hovering above Clay, not sure what to do with them.

Clay shook his head, and instead pulled George down the couch so he was forced to lie down as well. Clay pressed his ear against George's sternum, hands balling in his shirt. George took a second to adjust, but wrapped one arm around Clay and the other went to his hair, where he dragged it slowly through the damp mess.

"Can you hear my heartbeat?" George whispered. Clay nodded very slightly, still keeping his ear pressed against George's chest. His hands were still shaking as he held George close. Every part of his body was shaking.

Lorna quietly re-entered the room, and George nodded at the blankets he hadn't touched yet. Lorna picked one up, gently placing it over them both.

"Thank you." George said softly to her.

"Do I need to get Drista?" She asked quietly. George shook his head.

"Clay said she's ok." He replied, still combing his fingers through the boy's hair, who was still crying quietly against George.

"You need to get him changed into warm clothes before night." She said. George nodded, looking down at Clay who had his eyes closed now.

"I will in a bit." He said. Lorna nodded and left the room once again. George took a deep breath, still playing with Clay's damp hair as the boy slowly started to calm down.

"Are you ok?" George asked softly. Clay let out another shaky sob, and George held him tighter. "Did... did your father do something?"

"K-kicked me out." Clay whispered.

George's eyes went wide, and his hand stopped moving through Clay's hair.

"Why would he do that?" He asked. Clay pressed his face against George, and mumbled something that George couldn't quite pick up. "Clay?" George asked.

Clay rotated away slightly as he whispered his next words.

"I told him I'm bisexual."

•

The next morning, there was a gentle knock on George's door, so he rotated his head to look at it. Lorna walked in carefully, but when she saw George was awake, she relaxed.

"How is he?" She asked. George looked down at the boy asleep against him, his ear still firmly pressed against George's sternum, and both arms trapping him in a hold.

"He fell asleep right after I got him upstairs and in bed." George said.

"Did he get changed?"

"Yeah. He borrowed some of my clothes and got changed in the bathroom. But he wasn't talking. He was on the verge of sleep, I'm surprised I managed to get him upstairs." George said, a hand gently brushing through Clay's hair as he looked at the peaceful boy.

"Did he say what happened?" Lorna asked. George nodded.

"Can he stay here for a bit?" George said, looking back at his mother. Lorna frowned, eyes softening.

"Of course he can stay. And what about his face? What happened?"

"I don't know. It's not too bad, a few cuts and bruises. But I... I think it was his..." George didn't want to finish the sentence.

"Ok." She nodded, knowing what George was going to say. "When he wakes up, and is ready, he can tell me if he needs me to do anything." Lorna said. George nodded, and looked back down at Clay, freezing as the boy stirred slightly. But he just mumbled and tightened a hand in George's shirt. George returned to gently combing his hair, and the grip on his shirt relaxed again.

"He must feel safe around you." Lorna commented quietly. George didn't respond, not wanting to talk for fear of waking him. And also because he didn't believe it.

When she left, George sighed slightly, his hand moving to Clay's face, softly touching his forehead to first inspect his eyebrow.

A loud sound echoed in the room from his phone, which gave George a heart attack. Clay immediately stirred too, and looked up.

"Red alert." Clay said, groggily trying to sit up. George stopped him.

"No. My phone is ringing. I'm sorry. Go back to sleep, Clay." He said, as the sound continued. Clay just nodded, his eyes closing again as he rested back down against George, falling asleep again almost immediately.

George reached over to his phone without moving too much, and saw it was an unknown number. He answered it though, like he always did.

"Hello?" He said softly, not wanting to talk too loud. He resumed playing with Clay's hair while his other hand held the phone to his ear.

"George?" He heard a small voice on the other end.

"Hi?" George said again, not being able to tell who it was.

"It's... it's Drista. This is George right?" She said.

"Yes, it is. Are you ok? Are you safe, Drista?" He asked. Drista sighed in relief, her breath shaky.

"I'm fine. Is Clay with you? He left and I don't know where he went. Father didn't tell me. And Clay doesn't have his phone, it's confiscated." She said.

"Clay's ok. He's with me. He's asleep right now. Everything is ok." George said calmly. Drista took a shaky breath.

"Thank god. All I know is they had an argument and then Clay disappeared. I was so scared." She said.

"He's ok. Are you ok? Do you need to be picked up too?" He asked.

"No, I'm fine. Could... could you just get Clay to call me when he wakes up?" She asked.

"Yes, of course. How did you get my number by the way?" George asked.

"Clay gave it to me ages ago. Said that if there was ever an emergency and he wasn't around, to call you. He said he trusts you. And that you and your family would help if I need it." Drista said.

George almost teared up at that.

"Of course we would. I'm glad he gave it to you. Please don't ever hesitate to call, Drista. Are you positive you are ok? We can come get you now, I know Lexi would love to see you." He said.

"No, I'm ok. I haven't left my room, and I don't need to. Father isn't mad at me, I'll be ok. I've got school in a few hours soon." She said.

"Ok, I trust you. But seriously, call me if you need anything." George said.

"I will. Thank you, George." She said, and then she hung up. George took a deep breath. He saved her number to his phone and returned it to his bedside table.

Clay looked peaceful, if it wasn't for the cuts and tear stains.

And the bruises that had formed overnight.

His lip was split, and his eyebrow busted. And he had a large bruise on his left cheek, and also on his jaw. They were dark and purple and red and angry. And that was just the injuries that George could see.

George just remained repetitively dragging his fingers across Clay's scalp, threading through his fluffy hair. George got a couple hours of sleep, surprisingly. Clay had woken up a few times, crying, and George just whispered calmly in his ear, helping him back to sleep. He hummed to him as well. Humming soft, wordless songs he didn't even know the name of.

Another hour passed of peaceful silence. Well, mostly peaceful apart from the guilt eating George up.

He left Clay alone with the Mayor. And it was the Mayor who did this. If George had stayed, and not been a *coward* then this wouldn't have happened.

*I'm a horrible friend.*

Clay eventually moved his head again, his eyes opening slightly. George looked at him and pulled the wavy hair out of his eyes again.

"Hey." George said softly. Clay lifted his head slightly to look at George, and look around the room, but then he just lay back down, grabbing a new fist full of shirt. His eyes stayed open though.

George didn't speak any more. He knew Clay was awake but wasn't sure if he wanted to talk yet. He just continued what he had been doing the whole night, playing with his hair.

*I let you down.*

"Can... can you hum again?" Clay whispered, making George stop his hand motion.

"Ok." He whispered back, humming a low tune he still could not identify. But it was soothing nonetheless. Clay just listened, feeling the vibrations of George's humming from his sternum.

He closed his eyes again, ignoring everything else and just focusing on George.

George, who has held him the entire night, who combed his hair and got him warm. George, who let him into his house with no hesitation even though he was still mad. George who was scared at the blood on Clay's face. George who let Clay cry into his chest, who hugged him each time he woke up, who kissed him on the forehead not once, but multiple times.

George who cares.

Clay did nothing when George was cornered by the Mayor, and when he was told disgusting things. Clay did nothing.

And George has done everything for him.

## Chapter End Notes

So much aaaaangst  
I love it.

Sorry for the sorta cliffhanger. Couldn't fit everything in one chapter.

I'm confident I'll be able to keep doing weekly updates for the rest of the story since there isn't that long to go. Except uni is cracking down and I'm struggling to find time to write. But I'm sure I'll manage.

Just giving you a heads up if I'm ever a day or two late.

But Wednesday is Super Day, so I'll find a way.



# He leaped

## Chapter Summary

George wants Clay to go to the police about his abusive father. But Clay just wants to go ice-skating with his friends

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George could see the corners of Clay's closed eyes prickling with tears, and he frowned and stopped humming.

Clay opened his eyes and blinked, and George reached forward and gently wiped away a tear, his thumb resting against his cheekbone a split second longer than it needed.

"Sorry." Clay said, his voice breaking when he spoke.

"Don't be sorry." George said.

Clay didn't respond. He was sorry for a lot of things.

"Are you comfortable? Do you need anything? Hungry?" George asked. Clay bit his tongue to stop himself from tearing up more.

"I'm fine." He whispered.

"Do you want to sit up?" George asked. Clay considered it for a long moment, before nodding and lifting his head. George shifted so he could properly get up, and he moved his pillows so they were propped up against the wall. Clay pulled one of the blankets with him, holding it up to his chest.

George noticed that Clay had winced when he got up. He thought it might have just been a numb arm, or a stiff neck. But Clay put a hand on his side.

"Are you ok?" George asked. Clay nodded. His eyes were puffy from crying most of the night, and his hair was sticking up from George brushing through it.

"Yeah." He said. George watched him.

George didn't want to push him, didn't want to pry. He didn't want to make Clay upset again either. So he was waiting for Clay to initiate it.

"I never thought he would actually kick me out." Clay whispered, staring straight ahead at the opposite wall. George sighed, and sat closer to Clay, letting their shoulders press together. Clay leaned his head against George's shoulder, moving the blanket so it was covering the both of them.

"I've only told a few people I'm bi. It's something I always felt like I couldn't share because of my father and his reputation to keep." Clay said.

George just listened, not wanting to interrupt.

"He... he was so disgusting towards you, so so awful. You didn't deserve to hear what he said. I hate myself for not stepping in. I hate myself for being so scared of him."

"Clay, it's-"

"No. Don't say it's ok. It's not ok. I just let him speak to you like that. You're one of the most important people in my life. I've promised you multiple times I would protect you and not let you get hurt, and I just let him do that." Clay said, a pained expression on his face.

George leaned his head against Clay's.

"You left and I couldn't fix what he said. He was angry, and so was I. And I guess I snapped. I told him how awful he was and how dare he talk to you like that. And I told him that I was bisexual." Clay let out a shaky breath.

"That was dangerous. You knew it was." George whispered.

"Yeah." Clay winced. "But I couldn't let him do that to you. You already left but I wanted to try to fix things. I don't regret what I said or did, but I should have anticipated his reaction. I knew how he felt about all of it, and I knew that he would be angry. But... but I never thought he would actually kick me out. He said he doesn't consider me his son. And I'm a- a disgrace. A-and I don't deserve to even be a-alive." Clay's voice started wobbling as he spoke, and George grabbed one of his hands with his free one. Clay was the one who adjusted the grip, instead fiddling with George's fingers, moving his index finger across George's knuckles, between his fingers and tracing his palm.

Clay didn't even seem to notice what he was doing, he was still recalling the events of yesterday.

"I couldn't even grab any of my stuff. My phone is still in his office. I didn't... I didn't know where to go." Clay said, squeezing his eyes shut. George bit his lip trying not to tear up either as Clay told his story.

"You were the first person I thought of. Y-you also came out and people hurt you for it. And whenever I'm with you, you make me feel like me." Clay said softly.

George doesn't understand how he can do that. How he can make Clay feel like himself, when most of George's own life was a lie.

"And I know you're furious with me and I screwed everything up. But I trust you more than anyone." Clay said. "I don't know what I'm going to do. I've fucked everything up, with everyone." He sobbed. George lifted his head to lean forward to look into Clay's eyes. He reached out and quickly brushed a tear before letting his hand fall again.

"I'm here. You're safe. You aren't alone, Clay. And you aren't a disgrace. You are incredible, standing up for me and for yourself. I know how hard that must have been. And I can't imagine the fear you felt when you told him." George said earnestly.

Clay's lip trembled slightly as the the boy in front of him spoke.

"Clay, I am so so proud of you. So incredibly proud." George whispered, looking between both the green eyes. Clay closed his eyes and shook his head, choking back a sob.

"You're so brave." George reiterated.

"I'm not. I'm a coward." Clay closed his eyes.

"If you think that standing up for your friend, and then yourself, and then coming out to your homophobic father and then managing to walk through the entire city during a thunderstorm is cowardly. Then I don't even want to know what I am. I could never have done what you did. You are so, *so* brave, Clay." George said. Clay opened his eyes and then pulled George into another tight hug, resting his chin on George's shoulder.

"Whatever happens, I'm here for you, ok? I'm right by your side. You don't have to face him alone anymore." George said, and Clay clutched him tighter, a thank you without words.

"I know you aren't exactly happy with me and I know you're still hurt about-"

"Clay, that's not important right now." George stopped him. Clay just nodded subtly and George was relieved. He wanted to focus on Clay and his injuries and his safety, not his own stupid feelings.

When Clay eventually pulled away, he winced again, and George decided enough was enough.

"I need you to tell me where you are hurt." George said. Clay pointed at his entire bruised face. "You keep wincing when you move. Are you hurt anywhere else?" He asked.

Clay hesitated, but then moved a hand to the bottom edge of his shirt, and slowly lifted up a side.

George couldn't afford to blush now, even though he could see the band of Clay's boxers and a glimpse of his abs.

Because right on his hip bone was a massive angry bruise, creeping up his side and down below the waistline of his boxers. George gasped, and Clay lowered it again, looking away.

"How did that happen? Tell me exactly what happened after I left." George said. Clay's lip trembled but he nodded.

"You can't tell anyone." He said.

"Clay-"

"George. I'm serious. If my father gets in trouble, that means me and my sister are dragged into it." He said.

"If your father is doing anything to hurt either of you then I think you should get dragged *out* of it."

"You don't understand." Clay shook his head.

"Clay, tell me. We can talk about that more later, but I won't do anything without your permission." George said. Clay looked at him.

"You swear?" He said.

"So long as you are safe, then yes." George said. Clay nodded and took a deep breath.

"He doesn't... he doesn't do things very often. But he was really really mad. He-" Clay took another deep breath to compose himself. "My face is fine. I'm used to that."

*I'm used to that.*

George wanted to throw up

"This isn't the first time?" George whispered, and Clay slowly nodded his head.

George recalled every bruise and injury and elaborate story Clay has spun, including that time at the ER when he supposedly ran into a dining table.

"Clay." George's voice broke and he began to tear up. Clay looked at him and his face fell.

"No, don't cry. It's not that bad, George." He said quickly. George was horrified.

"Not that bad? He hurts you."

"I'm ok."

"Have you *looked* in the mirror!" George's voice rose and Clay clenched his jaw, looking away.

"Can I explain what happened?" He said. George took a deep breath to compose himself, and then nodded.

"Um. So yeah. My hip. I... well, I tried to leave the room but he didn't want me to leave yet. He hadn't finished yelling at me. Before I could do anything, he cornered me and shoved the couch against me. I was pinned between the couch and the wall, and I had rotated my hip towards it to take the force." Clay said.

"That's what caused the bruise?" George asked quietly. Clay nodded.

"He, uh. He punched me a few more time. While I was still stuck. I think I lost consciousness for a bit. I didn't have enough energy to push the couch away."

George was gripping Clay's hand so tightly.

"I shouldn't have left." George whispered. Clay looked at him.

"What?"

"If I had stayed he wouldn't have done it, you wouldn't be hurt." George let go of Clay's hand. "I'm so sorry."

Clay grabbed his hand again with knitted eyebrows

"George, it wasn't your fault."

"I let you down." George said. Clay adamantly shook his head.

"No. I let *you* down. I said nothing. I let him say that to you and threaten you."

George chewed on his lip, not forgiving himself for what he let happen to Clay.

"It's fine now. It's fixed. I've been kicked out and I'm homeless but it's ok." Clay said with a shrug.

"It wasn't hit fault."

"It's not fine. It's not fixed. But you aren't homeless." George said. "You know you're welcome here."

"I can't do that to you and your family-"

"I feel like Mom has been wanting to take you in for ages. You'll break her heart if you don't move in." George said lightheadedly. Clay smiled slightly, but then it fell.

"I can't leave Drista there. He doesn't hurt her at all really, I take his anger. But if I'm gone, I'm worried she'll do something dumb. I should go back and sort things out with my father." He said with a sigh and a small wince. "Maybe he will cool down enough to let me go back."

"You are not going back. But we can go get Drista. Lexi would be so happy for her to stay here too. I refuse to let either of you spend another second with him. I know he's your father, but I hate him." George said. Clay laughed slightly at that.

"I can't ask your family of that. We would be two more mouths to feed. I have no money or job."

"Clay." George sighed.

There was a knock on the door, and they both looked at it. "Yeah." George called.

Lorna and Mark both walked in. Lorna looked concerned and Mark had his ear pressed to his phone.

"Clay, honey. Are you alright?" Lorna walked over and bent down to examine Clay's bruised and cut face with pursed lips.

"I'm ok now." He said.

"Ok. You're not, but you seem ok enough to hear this." Lorna stood up straight and looked at Mark who hung up the phone. He looked slightly pissed.

"Some reporters found out you left home last night after an argument with your father." Mark looked at him. "Probably an anonymous tip from someone in the house."

Clay froze up, and George gently brushed his thumb across Clay's palm to comfort him.

"And since you haven't returned home this morning, a rumour has been spread you ran away from home." Mark said.

"Ran away?" Clay repeated.

"The media is all over it, trying to get the Mayor to put a word out, and are also trying to track you down. Police aren't involved yet since it's just rumours." Lorna explained.

"What do I do?" Clay asked, distressed.

"We will protect you, Clay. Just don't tell anyone where you are staying, and don't confirm or deny anything about running away. We called the school to say George and Lexi are taking the day off, but we didn't mention you. Lorna is going to go to your house with Lexi to get Drista before school starts." Mark said.

"Drista said she's ok. She called me this morning." George said. They all looked at him.

"She called you?" Clay asked.

"Yeah, and wants you to call her back soon." George said. "You can use my phone."

"I'm not leaving her in a house with a man who-" Lorna couldn't finish her sentence, just waved a hand at Clay.

"Clay, can you explain to us exactly what happened?" Mark said gently.

Clay leaned against the wall, looking nervous. He glanced at George who got the message.

"He doesn't want the police involved." George spoke for him.

"They damn well should be." Lorna said, clearly upset.

"Me and Drista would have nowhere to go." Clay said, wiping his eyes.

"Is that your main concern about going to the police?" Lorna asked gently. Clay nodded. "That's not an issue, Clay. I thought it was clear you're staying with us."

"I can't ask you to do that." Clay said, adamantly shaking his head.

"You didn't ask. We are telling you you're staying here." Mark said.

"You know we love you and Drista, Clay. We want to help." George added.

Clay swallowed and then slowly nodded.

"But if I go to police then... then." He shook his head, letting go of George's hand to put his hands in his hair and grip it. "It'll be all over the news. Sam Warden will use it as more leverage to become Mayor. Same with the evidence he found. Father will go to prison and I know he's awful and I don't want him as a father, but he's still..."

"He's still your father." Lorna said, sitting down on the other side of Clay and putting a hand on his shoulder.

"He's not much of a father, though. You can't seriously think you'd miss him." George said with furrowed eyebrows.

"George." Mark turned to him. "Can you go downstairs for a minute while we talk to Clay." Mark said.

"What? No." George said. "All I said was that he's a bad guy and I don't get why Clay would miss him."

"George." His mother said. "Go downstairs." George gritted his teeth and looked at Clay, who looked a little nervous.

"It's fine." Clay said. George stood up with a huff and left the room.

"I don't think George understands how hard it can be to let someone who is bad to be around go. He just sees right and wrong and good people and bad people." Mark said, taking George's spot on the bed.

"But I *do* agree with George. I know he's not a good father and he's awful and cruel, so I don't know why I'm scared." Clay said, pulling his knees to his chest.

"He's your father. And maybe you wouldn't miss him exactly, you'd miss the idea of a parent. He is related to you and it would be incredibly difficult to just let someone like that go, even when you know it's the best thing. It's like having a toxic best friend." Lorna said.

"I think it's just since Mom died, I'm running out of family. If he goes, it's just me and Drista. No house, no money." Clay said.

"Just know that whatever happens, we will be here. It's up to you if you go to the police, and

whichever decision you make, we will be right there with you." Mark said.

"Except I'm not letting Drista stay in that house alone. And I can't send you back in confidence." Lorna added.

Clay's lip trembled and he hugged Lorna.

"You guys are amazing parents." He whispered.

"We aren't amazing. It's the bare minimum to support your kids." Lorna said softly.

"But you go beyond that and support your kid's *friends*." Clay said, feeling bad he was crying onto her shoulder.

"You're a great kid, Clay. You deserve the same support we give out kids. And if your own father won't give it to you, we will." Mark said.

Clay felt so incredibly anxious. This was the hardest decision he's ever made, and he's a superhero for goodness sake.

"Can we get Drista first. Before I decide anything." He said softly.

"Of course. And you don't have to decide anything soon. Take your time. But if the police do come looking for you or your sister, then you know we can't stop them." Lorna said. Clay nodded.

"I think father will be happy to get us away from him for a little while anyways." He said.

"Then you and Drista can have some time to think about what you want to do. But in the meantime, you are staying here with us. And you aren't allowed to stress over it." Mark said with a smile at the end.

"Thank you. So much. I swear, I will repay it some day." Clay wiped his face.

"No need, Clay. We are just doing what your mother would have hoped." Lorna said.

There was a knock at the door, and Lexi came in, her phone in her hand. She gasped when she saw Clay's bruised and beaten face.

"Are you alright, Clay?" She asked.

"I'm fine now, thanks." He said, giving her a smile to show he wasn't in pain when he really was.

"That's good. But we need to go get Drista now, Mom." She then said quickly, looking at her Mom. Lorna stood up.

"Yes, let's go. Have you told her we are coming?"

"Yes. But we have to go now. Apparently she snuck into the Mayor's office and is now hiding outside in some bushes while security looks for her." She said, looking extremely anxious.

"She what?" Clay sat up straight.

"She's outside in the rain? Let's go." Lorna put a hand on her shoulder to turn Lexi around, but Clay quickly stood up too.

"Wait, can I come?" He asked, but the wince on his face when he put weight on his left side was

obvious. The massive bruise on his hip bone was more of an inconvenience than he expected.

"Clay, it's better you stay. We will go get her as fast as possible and bring her back safely, ok?" Lorna said, still ushering Lexi out of the room.

"I'm not that hurt." He said, trying to follow. But Mark put a hand on his shoulder before he could leave.

"Son, just sit down and rest. Drista is in good hands." He said. Clay ran a shaky hand through his hair.

"I know why she snuck into his office." He said quickly, flexing his fingers. "She went to get my phone."

"She will be ok. Sit down, I'll get George." Mark said calmly. Clay dug his nails into the palms of his hands.

"No need, I'm here." George said, quickly going to Clay's side, and grabbing his hands, opening his palms. He then made Clay sit back on the bed, and held both his hands tightly, while standing in front of him. "Clay, it's alright."

"It's not alright." Clay said, knee bouncing.

"She will be ok." George said soothingly. Clay nodded, taking a deep breath. George intertwined their fingers and let Clay pull him to sit beside him again.

"She's too much like me." Clay said, letting his head fall against George's shoulder.

"That's not a bad thing, Clay."

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Drista was ok when she arrived. After a brief hug and expression of concern from Drista, Clay started lecturing her about her stupid it was to sneak into their father's office.

She handed him his phone though, and he quickly pocketed it with a quick thanks, before continuing to berate her.

"Clay, let her be. Both of you are here and safe and that's all that matters." George said, tugging on Clay's sleeve, and Lexi pulled on Drista's hand.

"Wait. Should we talk about what to do about father?" Drista said.

"We can discuss that tomorrow." Lorna said, handing an ice pack, a few bandages, and some of the vasoline to George. "The two of you can just relax here for the day, alright?"

No one argued with that.

George and Clay walked back to George's room.

"Do you think going to the police would do anything?" Clay asked George softly when they arrived back in the room. George gestured for him to sit down on the bed, and he sat down opposite him, putting the first aid stuff on the bed.

"I mean, they can't ignore it. He is the Mayor, and I doubt the cops would *want* to question him or put him in jail or anything. But it can't be let go, you were hurt by him." George said.



He unscrewed the jar of vasoline, and dipped his fingers into it, his other hand coming up to Clay's cheek. He hesitated, but Clay gave him a small smile and he gently cupped Clay's face, keeping it steady.

"I really appreciate that you're here and you helped me." Clay whispered, and George started applying the jelly to the cut on his eyebrow first.

"Of course." George said, swallowing nervously. Now they had their chat, the memories of the previous day had come back, along with the feelings of frustration and heartbreak.

"I know you're probably still upset with me about everything." Clay then frowned slightly.

"It's... its not important right now." George muttered, now lowering his hand, and looking at Clay's lip. He had to apply the vasoline over the busted lip as well, but all he could focus on was the perfect shape of his lips, the light pink colour contrasting with his tan skin. They looked soft, even though it was cut.

"It is, though." Clay persisted, snapping George out of his stare.

George cleared his throat and tried to stop his shaky hand as his thumb found Clay's bottom lip.

"No, just... can we think about it later?" George said softly, as he gently parted Clay's lips and slowly soothed the gel into it. He could feel Clay's eyes on him, staring. George was certain he was as pink as Clay's lips were.

Clay's lips were soft, where it wasn't cut. It took all of his power to not think about what it would feel like with his lips pressed against his own.

He realised he had stopped moving his thumb, so he quickly pulled back, looking at Clay's eyes, which were trained on George's own lips.

"I don't want to talk about it later." Clay lifted his eyes back to meet George's. "We need to talk now."

George nervously swallowed and wiped the residue of the vasoline onto a tissue before grabbing a small bandage.

"You're tired, I imagine. Why don't we just rest and sleep?" George said, fiddling with the bandage.

"I don't know if I can sleep now. My mind is racing with thoughts about my father and what I'm doing now... and *you*." Clay continued to drill into George with his eyes. "I still need to fix things with you."

George didn't know what to say. But he took a deep breath. "I don't think it can be fixed. I think we just need to forget it and move on." He looked up, not looking into Clay's eyes, focusing on his eyebrow again.

Clay frowned at that.

"Its fine. I can just pretend you never said anything." George said calmly, gently pulling Clay closer by his chin, and then holding his forehead still with his right hand as he brought the bandage up with his left.

*That's what Dream wanted, when he confessed. He regretted saying he loved me. So I'll give Clay an out.*

"I don't think either of us can do that." Clay said softly. George paused, meeting Clay's eyes.

"What?"

"Well I'm not going to get rid of my feelings and you definitely aren't going to forget it." Clay said softly. "I don't want to just erase what happened, I want to fix it."

George blinked.

"Ok. Then..." George took a deep breath. "Then we can just exist."

"Exist." Clay repeated slowly.

"This is a thing. It's complicated, and new." George bit back a smile at the memory of Dream saying the exact same words. *I needed more joke material anyways.* "We can just move on." George said, as he gently pressed the small bandage on the corner of his eyebrow covering the cut. Hopefully it wouldn't be too painful when he took it off.

"That's not going to work, George." Clay shook his head with a smile.

"Can we make it work?" George asked desperately, pressing down on the sticky part before pulling back.

"No. I made a mistake and I've hurt your feelings and we can't just forget that or move on. I'm going to try to fix things." Clay said.

George didn't respond. It was all too much. His heart still ached.

"I'm going to sort out my feelings and give you the explanation you deserve. We aren't going to just move on." Clay said adamantly.

"I don't know what you mean."

"I know you don't like me." Clay sighed, and George winced at the lie he had told. "And that's ok. And I know I can't change that. But I still hurt you and I'm still going to fix it and make it up to you." Clay said.

"How?" George asked softly. He tried to give Clay the option to give up, and move on, like Dream had wanted that time he confessed. Granted, it didn't work for them, neither of them could explain their feelings or reasonings, because they've *always* kept secrets from each other, and it's the easiest way.

Dream couldn't explain why he loved G. And George couldn't tell Dream why he didn't.

"I don't know yet."

They stay there for a few more moments. George felt extremely conflicted and Clay felt guilty.

"Here." George said finally, grabbing the ice pack wrapped in a cloth and holding it out to Clay. "For your face or your hip or whatever is most painful."

Clay took it with a small smile, resting it against his cheek.

"Thank you, George."

George just nodded in return, before standing up and taking the rubbish to the bin. Clay grabbed

his newly returned phone.

"I'm getting so many messages from the group." Clay said.

"Me too." George said, feeling a buzz in his pocket.

"Oh. They wanted to do the ice skating thing today after school. I forgot about that." Clay said.

"Oh. Yeah." George said nervously, grabbing the jar of vasoline and moving it to his desk instead of the bed. Clay looked at him.

"Do you wanna go?"

"No, I didn't even want to originally." George said. He would have been transformed. But with Clay hurt... that wasn't really an option for today. One day, and then he will go back to hiding.

"Maybe it could be good. To get my mind off things." Clay said slowly.

"Clay, you're injured and exhausted and have so much going on. Plus there's a news story about you running away. How can you even consider going to hang out with our loud and obnoxious friends doing a dangerous sport." George said in confusion, sitting back down on the bed, a little extra space between the this time.

"Dangerous? Ice skating isn't dangerous. Have you ever even been ice skating?" Clay asked with a light laugh. George pursed his lips.

"No."

"Well that settles it. We are going ice skating in a few hours." Clay declared.

"What! What about the other stuff I said! You should be resting and laying low." George said.

"Can you even stand for a while with your bruised hip?"

"It's not that bad. I'll take some more painkillers. Please, Georgie." Clay said, looking at him with wide puppy dog eyes and a small pout. George hated it.

"No." He looked away.

"Georgie." Clay grabbed one of his shoulders, and George looked back at him again, looked at each bruise on Clay's face with a twinge of pain.

"No, Clay. I'm not going. You can go, I don't care." He said. But that was a lie, he did care. And if Clay went, he would as well. Even though it would have been a good chance to transform.

"Ok." Clay sighed. "I won't go either."

That was the second issue.

Because now George felt bad.

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"Holy shit." Nick sprinted at them and pulled Clay in for a tight hug, and Clay embraced him back. Nick pulled away soon after though and stared at his face with his mouth open.

"It's fine. I'm fine." Clay assured him.

"What the fuck happened." Quackity chimed in as everyone rushed over.

"The news said you ran away from home." Skeppy said.

"I'm fine, guys. I'm staying with George for a bit." Clay said, stepping closer to George instinctively.

"How come? What happened to your face?" Tommy asked.

"It's not important." George said, sensing Clay was feeling uncomfortable from the attention. "Are we going to be skating or what?"

Most people had done ice skating before apparently. George hadn't. But neither had Ranboo, Tubbo or Nick. So while everyone was getting the hired ice skates on, the others were trying to explain to them in very convoluted ways on how it works.

"I think it'll be easier once you actually get on the ice." Clay said, holding out a hand to George who huffed but accepted it, slowly standing up onto the blades. It was easier to balance than he was expecting, so that was good at least.

"Are you sure you want to do this? If you feel off at any second just take a break." George said to him. Clay nodded, and followed everyone else to the ring. There were a few dozen people here as well skating around.

George noticed a few people glancing over, at Clay. Either the boy didn't notice the looks, or he didn't care for them.

Nick yelled when he confidently took a step onto the ice and then immediately slipped and landed on his ass. Most of their friends laughed at him, but Karl just smiled and helped him up, tightly gripping his hand and bicep.

"Use the wall, you nimrod." He guided him away. Darryl, Skeppy and Quackity all skated on easily, Quackity nearly tripping, but immediately skated off. Tommy was almost crying of laughter when Tubbo and Ranboo both held onto the wall with their dear lives.

Clay stepped on before George and turned around with a grin. George swallowed and slowly took a step into the rink, holding onto the edge. It was certainly slippery and he clutched onto the wall like his life depended on it. Clay chuckled and skated beside him as George slowly edged along the wall, dragging his feet across the ice.

"Try taking little steps." Clay offered.

"I got it, Clay." George muttered, taking the smallest incremental steps.

His foot skidded and he almost did the splits.

"You got it?" Clay chuckled. George glared at him and dragged his foot back up to standing.

"I don't need your help." George said. Clay shrugged.

"Alright." He then skated away.

George continued dragging himself along the wall, the blades cutting through the ice. He did try taking small steps but it was slippery.

He really had poor balance as a civilian.

"Gogster." A voice pulled up next to him. George glanced to his side.

"Tomathy."

"Why are you so bad." Tommy asked, skating backwards in front of George. George just glared at him.

"Why are you good? You've done this before?" George asked.

"Yeah, plenty of times. Phil would take me, Wilbur and Techno when we were younger. With Kristin too." He said. George just nodded, trying to put less weight on the wall.

"Who's Kristin?" George asked.

"She was Phil's wife." Tommy said with a small shrug.

"Oh I see." George said, noticing the use of was and decided not to question it further.

"But yeah. So we came here a lot. I'm a pro."

"That's nice." George scoffed. "I've never done this before." He wobbled.

"Clearly. I'll show you the best way to learn." Tommy said with a grin. George narrowed his eyes.

"It better not involve me leaving this wall. I've bonded with it." He patted the banister.

"Oh, it definitely does." Tommy grabbed George's arm and pulled him, and he almost tripped but Tommy held him up and pulled him closer to the middle.

"Tommy!" George yelled, holding onto the sophomore for dear life. Tommy let go of George and pushed him.

Maybe his thought process was that George would gain balance quick out of reflex. But that did not happen at all. George skidded and fell over onto the hard ice..

"Sorry!" Tommy said quickly, but started cackling. George glared up at him, wiping his hands which were now damp and cold onto his pants.

"What the hell, Tommy. That hurt." George said, trying to get up, but his feet skidded on the ice, and he couldn't find his footing. This made Tommy laugh harder. "Help me up, you dick."

"No." Tommy skated away.

George was in the middle of the rink, people skating around and nearing hitting him. And he couldn't get up since he didn't know how to balance.

"Need a hand?" He heard Clay appear and he sighed and looked up.

"Just help me stand." George grumbled. Clay chuckled and pulled George to his feet by hoisting him up under his arms.

Clay was going to let go, but George grabbed his forearms and gasped slightly. "No! I'm going to fall!"

"You're fine." Clay said, trying to pull away.

"No! Don't let go!" George held him tighter, staring at his feet, trying to keep them still on the ice.

"I would never." Clay smiled, pulling George a little bit closer. George swallowed and looked up, seeing Clay watching him.

"Actually... I think I've got it." George tried to pull away from Clay, but the other boy didn't let him. In fact, Clay held him tighter.

"Don't be like that." He frowned, and George looked away. "I know you're still upset. And you're trying to hide it because of the shit that went down with my father. But I don't want you to just pretend everything is ok for me. Your feelings were hurt." Clay continued.

"They weren't hurt. It's fine. It's not a big deal. I hurt *your* feelings." George said.

"I *did* hurt your feelings. About the whole liking two people thing. And I made you feel like a backup, or a replacement, or the easy option. When none of that is true. But I'm sorry I made you feel that way, I don't know how I can fix it." Clay started to pull George along, keeping him steady as they slowly drifted around the ring.

"You actually like me?" George asked softly, staring intently at his feet because he was focusing on not falling at the same time.

"Of course." Clay answered back with no hesitation. George felt his heart beating faster. He still couldn't comprehend the fact that the boy he was practically in love with liked him back.

"But you like someone else." Clay sighed. "And that's ok, I shouldn't have expected you to like me back."

"Clay..." George felt sick. "I just... I have too much going on to even consider dating. And you like someone else as well.... I'm sorry I... I don't..." He couldn't even lie anymore. He couldn't say he didn't like Clay, because he did. So much.

"It's fine. I get it. But I can't lose you, as my best friend. Please don't leave me." Clay said.

George's feet skidded and almost pulled the blonde down with him, Clay grabbed him tightly around the waist to hold him up. People skated past as they caught their balance again.

"I wouldn't leave you." George whispered, looking at Clay's beautiful familiar eyes.

Clay pulled him closer to the wall so they had something to grab if they lost balance again.

"I don't know how I like two people." Clay swallowed, grabbing George's hand and pulling him along again. Now that George had the wall on his right, he could have a hand on that as well to steady himself. "Like, my brain knows they are two different people but my heart is like... it's like it's the same kind of love."

George swallowed. *Love.*

"It's like. It's not like half of my feelings are for one and half are for the other... It's like *all* of my feelings are for *both* of you." Clay said.

"What." George blinked. This was an extremely uncomfortable conversation. He wished Clay had just taken his offer to move on and pretend nothing happened.

"I know what I mean." Clay sighed. "I feel so confused all the time and guilty and I'm a horrible

person for liking two people, but I don't like either of you any less and although neither of you like me back, I feel like I'm betraying you."

"Right." George said, in a strained voice.

"Do you understand what I mean?" Clay asked. George glanced at him.

"Understand what?"

"Liking two people. Do you understand what I'm saying or am I just spitting nonsense and making you more confused."

George just stared at him.

"I'll stop taking about it, it's making you uncomfortable." Clay said, looking away from George, straight ahead.

"No, it's fine, I just-" George hesitated. "When you like two people, how do you know it's actually feelings for them both. And not like... you love them as a friend, or family... or like... a coworker, or... someone else." He asked.

"Romantic love is different to friendship." Clay looked at George. "I look at you and I see someone I want to spend all my free time with, and hold close and sacrifice anything for. I guess... I know it's feelings because you're my whole world. I trust you, I'd do anything for you and my world would simply fall apart if something happened."

Clay stared into George's eyes, and George couldn't look away.

"My heart yearns and aches and breaks for you." Clay said, words soft and with so much truth that it was painful. "That's how I know it's love."

George clenched his jaw so tight that he feel a tooth ache coming. *I trust you, I'd do anything for you and my world would fall apart if something happened.*

George knew what he meant.

"And it's the same for the girl?" George asked quietly. Clay looked away and didn't speak, but he nodded slightly. "You feel that for two people." He swallowed.

George pulled his hand away from Clay and grabbed the wall with both hands.

"I'm going to go get some food." George said, not looking at Clay as he pulled himself to the exit.

"Oh. Ok. Um... I think the whole group is actually eating now too." Clay said, and George looked over to see everyone sitting down on a long table near the front entrance.

"Right. You going to join?" He asked, as he stepped off the ice and onto the slightly spongy normal flooring.

"I might skate around a little more." Clay said with a shrug.

"Ok." George felt awkward. We're things awkward between them?

They were still for a few moments.

"Are things different between us?" Clay asked

And in that moment, George saw Dream. But he blinked again and saw Clay. Just the Mayor's son with dirty blonde hair and a simply white hoodie and no mask or green clothing. Because this time Clay said the words, not Dream.

"Different?" George repeated slowly.

"Did I ruin our friendship?" Clay asked nervously.

"Things are always different when something new happens." George said slowly. "But... you didn't ruin things. You couldn't, you're Clay."

Clay smiled at that.

"Ok." He leaned away from the wall. "Love you, Georgie." He waved, before skating away.

George turned around and walked over to his friends, who were all chatting and eating. He sat down between Nick and Quackity and everyone turned to him.

"Is Clay ok? What even happened to him?" Karl asked.

"He's alright. Family stuff. Him and his sister are staying with my family for a while, but don't spread that information around." George said.

He took off his stupid skates and slipped on his actual shoes. He did not want to go back on the ice again.

"The bruises and cuts... was that.."

"Don't bring them up." George interrupted Nick. "I don't think it's something Clay will want to talk about."

"Ok." Nick nodded, fiddling with something on his wrist. "If he needs anything, I can help as well."

"Thanks." George said.

"How long are we planning on skating for?" Skeppy asked, and George was relieved for the change in topic.

"Well, I think my brother wanted to do something today so maybe not for too long." Tommy said with a shrug.

"What did he want to do?"

"I don't know. He texted me where I was when school ended and I told him I'm skating with my friend group and he didn't respond but I'm *assuming* he wanted to know so we could hang out." He said with an excited grin. "Especially since my injury has basically gone." He lifted his shirt, and there was only a faint scar.

George's eyes widened and everyone else seemed shocked as well.

"How did it heal that quick? It's only been a few weeks." Darryl said. Tommy dropped his shirt with a shrug and put his hands behind his head, leaning back in his seat.

"I'm just built different."



"Seriously though. What did they do to fix that?" Nick said.

"Dunno. I had some stitches but it got better quick they took them out and then I had some cream but I feel like I woke up one morning and it was just better. But I wasn't really paying attention to the healing."

"That's incredible." Karl said.

"But yeah, so since I'm better, I think that's why my brother wants to hang out with me." Tommy said.

"Which brother?" Tubbo asked.

"Techno."

There was a loud explosion that made all of them jump. People started screaming and George whipped his head around.

Part of the roof, above where you purchase the ice skates had collapsed, dust and debris still falling from the ceiling. An evacuation alarm started blaring, and people were rushing towards the exit and off the ice rink.

George felt someone grab his wrist and pull him up, but his eyes were on the part of the roof that had fallen. He saw someone was beneath it.

He pulled away from Nick and sprinted over, pushing through the rushing people. He reached the part of fallen ceiling and realised it was made of brick. There was a man with his foot stuck in the fallen wreckage. George immediately pulled some of the material off and helped pull him out.

"You alright?" George asked. The man nodded and George helped him to his feet. He was limping slightly but could put a bit of weight on it.

There was another explosion, this time over the ice rink, and it was larger. George looked to see there were still a lot of people on the rink, but his eyesight immediately locked onto Clay, who was skating around, helping people off the rink who were slow at skating. The falling debris had nearly hit him, but he skated out of the way.

There was another two explosions, and George could hear the ceiling cracking in multiple sections.

The explosions didn't stop after that point, they were every few seconds. George heard his name being called and saw his friends by the large open entrance, beckoning him to hurry. He ran back to them, narrowly avoiding falling rubble.

Nick grabbed his arm the second he could and tugged him outside harshly.

"You need to go, George. They probably know you're here." He said, pulling him further back from the building. There were still people rushing out of the building.

George could see inside still, and was craning his neck.

"Clay is still inside." He said.

"He is? Shit." Nick said, also trying to look through the people.

"Wait... there! I see him. Clay!" George yelled, jogging back to the door. Clay helped a small girl off the rink, before looking around for any more people. The girl came running over and Nick

pulled her outside as some of the ceiling fell right where she was.

"Clay, come on!" George yelled. The entire building was collapsing now, and George could barely see Clay through the dust and falling debris.

Clay looked over, and started skating across the rink.

George saw a bomb land on the actual ice, and his eyes widened as it exploded. The bombs were coming through the ceiling now. It must be the villain with the explosions from that day at the school.

Clay had dodged the bomb by diving out of the way, his body skidding further back than expected because of the ice.

"Clay!" Nick yelled, as the dirty blonde quickly tried to get to his feet.

There was a loud groan of the building, and a massive section of the ceiling fell. Clay looked up, and skated away, but he wasn't fast enough. George screamed and Nick gasped as Clay was knocked to the floor, his leg caught under some rubble.

"Clay!" George yelled, and was going to run in, but Nick quickly stuck an arm out. And thank god he did, because a pole landed right where George was about to step.

Clay was on the ice, lying on his back with his leg stuck. George could see a bit of blood on his temple and hoped it was maybe his busted eyebrow from yesterday bleeding again and not a hit to the head.

"Clay, get up!" Nick shouted.

George needed to go transform, what was he still doing? But there were so many people and he couldn't justify running right now, when he was gripping onto Nick's arm and watching his other friend try to escape the exploding building.

Clay tried to pull his leg free, but he was struggling.

George looked up and saw some lighting had come loose, and was dangling by its wires. It had sparks flying and it was making zapping and buzzing noises. And it was right above Clay.

"Clay! Move!" He screamed. But Clay couldn't move.

George felt stuck. He needed to transform. He needed to. Or he could run over and try to pull Clay out anyways.

One of the wires snapped, and so did George's self-restraint.

He pulled away from Nick and sprinted into the building. He heard his name be called, but heard a loud crash immediately after. He turned back to see the entire entrance had been covered by an explosion above.

There was dust everywhere and pieces of brick and rubble were falling all around him. Something hit his shoulder and he gasped and pulled his arm closer to his body and stumbled backwards.

He looked back to Clay, who looked exhausted as he tried to pull his leg out.

George ran to the entrance of the ice rink, and jumped over the barrier onto the cold ice. It was

easier to walk on with normal shoes.

The lights above Clay creaked and sparked and swayed.

"Clay!" George yelled, and ran to him, skidding slightly on the ice. The dirty blonde twisted his head to look over, and when he saw George running through the falling rubble, his eyes went wide and his face paled more.

The wire snapped from above, and the lights started to fall, the zapping echoing in the crumbling building.

"George! Go!" Clay screamed, as George sprinted at him.

George made a split-second decision, but it was the only option he had.

He took a deep breath, still sprinting at the wreckage, but it felt like time had slowed down slightly. Everything was slightly quieter as he felt Clay's stare on him.

"Mask on."

He leaped.

He closed his eyes the second he felt the warm body beneath him, and gripped the boy tight.

"Shield."

Their world became muffled.

## Chapter End Notes

Oh?

Is that?

What I think it is?

Possibly... an identity?

Being revealed?

\*shocked pikachu face\*

Man, I love cliffhangers.

I posted a snippet for the next chapter (Chapter 51) on my twitter a few days ago. Go check it out if you want and why not give me a follow while you're there. Maybe I'll release the title of the next chapter, who knows.

@/LottiarAT :))

ALSO PLS DONT SPOIL IN THE REPLIES TO MY TWEET. you can express your emotions but don't say what happens in the chapters cause some people may not have read it yet :)))



# The world is falling apart

## Chapter Summary

A villain is blowing up the city, but it feels like more than just buildings are falling apart for George, Dream and Sapnap

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The world is falling apart.

Still breaking and collapsing and tearing itself apart. But it was tuned out for the moment. It was quiet, the blue shield protecting them from not only the wreckage but also the noise of everything falling apart.

It was just the two of them. Clay and George, in their bubble.

Well. Clay and GNotFound.

George's heart was louder and faster than it had ever been. He didn't dare move, as if maybe what he just did went unnoticed. It didn't really happen. He wasn't really here. Clay wasn't really here.

But the racing heart beneath him told otherwise.

George swallowed and lifted himself up, hands pressing against the floor, so his torso was now hovering.

He took a deep breath and looked down at Clay.

The green eyes reflected back, staring straight into the goggles, straight into his own eyes as if Clay could actually see them.

As if Clay was seeing his eyes for the first time.

They were silent for too many seconds. Too many wasted seconds.

"...George?" Clay finally whispered, his voice breaking as he stared into the goggles of GNotFound.

George didn't respond. He was too in shock, too terrified, too panicked.

Clay reached a hand up, thumb brushing just beneath the edge of the goggles, on George's cheek. His hand was shaky, and his eyes were glistening.

The next second, Clay embraced him completely, wrapping his arms tightly around George's neck and pulled him close. Clay buried his face against George's chest, and clutched him so tight, as if he feared he would disappear. George didn't hug back, his hands were frozen by Clay's sides, heart pounding as the boy embraced him.

"It's you." Clay said, voice as shaky as his hands.

George finally snapped back into action, remembering everything that was going on. He was GNotFound. He had a job to do.

He pulled away from Clay, which was difficult because the dirty blonde did not want to let go. But George knelt beside him, quickly looking away and at the trapped leg, pulling the rubble off. Clay was gripping his arm tightly, but he tried to ignore it.

Clay's pants were torn, and there was a bit of blood, but George couldn't tell if it was broken. He didn't look at Clay as he picked the boy up.

He didn't want to look at him. Didn't want to think about what he had done.

What he had ruined.

The shield flickered, and he quickly ran through the debris that had enclosed their bubble.

The shield disappeared the second they got out, but the building was still falling. Clay covered his face and pressed it against George's chest to protect his eyes. It took them both back to the ceremony when George saved him from the falling building and fire.

George ran off the rink, having to jump over piles of brick, and he ran to the back of building. He kicked the crumbling brick wall harshly with his foot, and created a hole big enough for them both to fit through.

When he climbed through the wall, he was now behind the building, in a small alleyway tucked between this building and the next.

He carefully placed Clay on the ground, beside a dumpster and against the brick wall, and he gently started looking and touching his leg to see how injured it was.

"George..." Clay said, gripping his forearm to get his attention, but George didn't look up.

"We will talk about this later." He cleared his throat and shook his head. "You can't tell anyone. I know it wasn't what you were expecting at all. George Davidson was probably the least likely person to be a hero. I-I know it's weird. But you can't tell anyone, Clay, and I'm sorry for lying all the time and I can imagine you're probably disappointed that I'm George and-"

"No!" Clay grabbed his hands and made George look at him. Clay was smiling, with tears in his eyes. "No, this is the best thing ever. George, G..." He chuckled slightly and took a deep breath. "I'm..."

He stopped.

*I'm Dream.*

He almost said it. *I'm Dream and the two people I love are you. Both of you. I'm not going crazy. I fell in love with you twice. I'm Dream and you're GNotFound. I'm Clay and you're George.*

*And everything fits together perfectly.*

But it doesn't fit together perfectly.

Because GNotFound doesn't love Dream.

And George doesn't love Clay.

The boy Clay is in love with likes someone else, someone he doesn't even know.

"What? You're what?" G asked, reaching up to the side of Clay's head, touching the blood with

concern. Clay blinked.

"I'm happy." Clay said, swallowing. "I'm happy it's you. I'm relieved it's you. I can't imagine a better GNotFound." He smiled a small, sad smile, trying to mask his heartbreak.

George looked away.

"Is your leg ok?" He asked, clearing his throat.

"It's fine." Clay said, still staring at the face half hidden by the goggles. George's face. G's face.

"Your head?"

"Oh." Clay put his hand on the side of his head. It was only a small gash. "Also fine." He definitely had a pounding headache.

"I need to go... you know... find the villain. But I'll be back." George said awkwardly, hiding his shaky hands behind his back and taking a deep breath to control his breathing.

"Ok." Clay couldn't take his eyes off him.

He wanted to reach out and touch his face, the freckles, the jawline, the lips, the nose. He wanted to take off the goggles even though he couldn't and see the eye bags, and the deep brown eyes. He wanted to find George. And then he wanted to look at George and find G.

Everything made sense.

But at the same time, nothing made sense.

After a few more seconds of Clay staring at the hero, who was just staring at the ground, George ran away, and Clay's memory started going haywire.

George is GNotFound.  
GNotFound is George.

This whole time, this *entire year*, he has been in love with GNotFound.  
In love with George, and he didn't even realise until recently.

His smile fell slightly as guilt swept through his body. How was he so oblivious? George was right there in front of him and he was so obsessed with G.

Clay ran his hands through his hair. *George can never find out.*

If George knew that Clay was in love with his hero self, and didn't realise he loved his civilian identity until later, his already low self esteem would take a hit.

Clay's eyes went wide.

George was GNotFound.  
Ok, that was already established.

But *George* was *GNotFound*.

The Blade is after George for knowing GNotFound's identity. Clay was angry at GNotFound for telling George his identity.

Clay let his head fall against the wall of the alley, hands still in his hair.

Of course George knew GNotFound's name. Because he *was* GNotFound.

*It's my fault George was even a target in the first place. I put George in danger. I put GNotFound in danger. I put them both-*

No. Clay shook his head. They are they same person. George was G.

So every time he fought alongside G, argued with him, talked with him and loved him, it was George.

And every time he went to school with George, hung out with him, hugged him and loved him, it was GNotFound.

He went to Mayor's meetings with GNotFound.  
He went with George.

He took biology with George.  
He studied with G.

He was angry at G.  
He yelled at George.

He went to prom with George.  
He went to prom with G.

He loved them both.  
And he still does.

"Clay!" A voice echoed through his thoughts and beyond the sound of falling buildings and explosion.

He looked up just as Sapnap ran to him, and dropped to his side, a hand on his shoulder and another hovering over his leg that was bleeding.

"Shit." Sapnap said, looking back at Clay's face. "Are you ok? What happened? Where's George?"

"Huh." Clay blinked a few times. Maybe the hit to his head was worse than he thought, because everything was fuzzy and he felt like he couldn't breathe and his hands were growing tingly.  
*GNotFound and George are the same. I put the two people, no, the one person I care about most in the world in danger. And he doesn't know it was me that did it.*

"Clay. Are you listening?" Sapnap shook his shoulder slightly. Clay nodded, grabbing the hero's forearm.

"Leg's ok." He said, but he wasn't entirely sure that was true.

"Where is George?" Sapnap asked.

"He..." *He transformed. Because George is G and everytime there has ever been a fight, it's been George with excuses. That's why his attendance is bad. That's why he had to see Puffy, just like I did. And I had too because I'm a superhero.*

"Clay! Pull it together. How did you get out of the building? Where is George? Did the villains get him?"



"George is ok." Clay tried standing up, using Sapnap and the wall behind him to get himself to his feet. "He's gone to hide. GNotFound saved us with his shield ." Clay's hands were shaky.

"He's gone to hide? Why didn't you go with him?" Sapnap said, holding Clay up as he tested his leg.

"Because..."

*Oh.*

The plan to keep George safe. Where he goes into hiding whenever there's villains. He just transforms. There is no hiding spot.

"It's secret. GNotFound took him." Clay swallowed, and then hissed when his ankle touched the ground.

"It's secret? Yeah, but they both just left you here. Right next to the falling building." Sapnap seemed to be growing angry. Clay just waved it off.

"I'm fine here, this is pretty hidden. You go." He tried to push Sapnap away, but the hero didn't budge.

"I'll take you to your friends first, or your home or somewhere else. The hospital." He gestured to the bleeding leg. "Who knows how bad that is." He looked up. "And your head!" He put a hand over the blood.

"It's fine." Clay shoved Sapnap's hand off, and put weight on his ankle. He hid his grimace with a pained smile. "See? And head wounds bleed more than they hurt."

There was a loud explosion from the street, followed by people's screams. Sapnap snapped his head towards the sound.

"Go." Clay said, shoving him again. Sapnap looked back with a concerned stare. "GNotFound used his shield. He has to transform back soon. You need to go help."

"If you aren't here when I get back I'm going to punch you and George and GNotFound." He said before turning and sprinting out of the alley. Clay didn't bother to question why the hero cared at all if he was safe.

Clay swallowed and leaned back against the wall. He should transform, he needed to help Sapnap and G, before he detransforms.

*George.*

*He had to help George fight.*

•

George shot arrow after arrow at the villain in black who was hiding on the top of another building, throwing bombs down at the streets below. George was just praying everyone below had left.

But as he shot at the villain, he was experiencing something he never has while transformed.

He couldn't shoot a single arrow on target.

His hands were shaking.

His breathing was tight.

He couldn't afford to panic now. He knew he had to push the thoughts about Clay away temporarily so he could focus on the fight

*But Clay knows who I am.*

*He knows my biggest secret.*

*He knows I am GNotFound, but not that I am in love with him.*

He knew his pendent was going to flash soon. He had to detransform, but there was no one else here yet, and the villain was causing so much destruction. He would have to sit out for half an hour. With his thoughts. And worries. And thinking about Clay. *How I let Clay find out.*

"GNotFound!" A voice arrived at his side, and the hostility in the tone made him raise his bow towards them.

But it was Sapnap, with anger flashing in his eyes.

"Where is George."

"He's hiding as usual." George said, taking a deep breath and then turning back to aim at the villain who was in the process of trying to destroy a cinema.

"You took him to hide?"

"Yes." His hands shook.

"Then please explain to me the thought process behind leaving Clay!" A shove, and George nearly dropped his bow from already being unsteady. He turned to Sapnap with confusion.

"Clay?"

"You just left him in the alley! His leg is injured and he was alone!" Sapnap shoved his chest again and George didn't have the motivation to stand his ground, he let the force make him step back.

"I- well-" George did just leave Clay there.

"What the fuck is wrong with you? I know George is the target because the Blade thinks he knows Dream's identity or something but that is just a *kid* you left bleeding in an alley!" Sapnap was furious, and he seemed taller.

"I know." George swallowed and snapped away his bow before he could drop it. "But he was hidden, a villain wouldn't find him. A-and I was going to go back, I wouldn't leave him there the whole time, I thought it was a safe space to hide."

"Then why didn't he hide with George, wherever he is." Sapnap poked his chest.

"I- He couldn't! He just couldn't." George said.

"That's not a valid reason." Sapnap growled.

"You have to trust me." George pleaded.

"It's hard to do that when I don't know half the shit that's going on! And when neither you, or Dream, or L ever tell me what's happening, and you just leave injured kids lying in alleyways! Clay

was hurt! Do you not fucking care?" Sapnap was yelling.

"Of course I do-"

"I get that to you, Clay is just some random kid, another person who got hurt from a villain, maybe even just the Mayor's son, but he's Clay! He's more than that, and he doesn't deserve to be forgotten about. He's my best mate, and I can't believe you would just leave him there!" Sapnap shoved George harsh, and the hero fell backwards.

"He..." George tried to take a deep breath, as his blood ran cold. "He's... your best mate?" George whispered slowly, looking up at Sapnap, who stood tall and angry.

"You fucking left him there and you took George away to God knows where. If it is as good of a hiding spot that you think you left Clay in, then George is also screwed." Sapnap continued to yell, his hands were clenched tight in fists.

"You..." George let out a small wheeze as he breathed in and tried to cover it with a cough. *Sapnap and Clay are friends.*

"You're selfish, GNotFound. You're so fucking selfish. You only care about you and Dream's identities, and not anyone else. I demand you tell me where you hid George. I need to know he's safe." Sapnap said.

*Sapnap is friends with Clay in real life.*

"Tell me where George is!" Sapnap flipped his coin and it turned into an axe, hovering over George. George just stared at it, eyes wide but hidden behind his goggles.

"I-I can't! You have to trust me, S-Sapnap." George's chest was rising and falling rapidly as his breathing grew worse.

"*Tell me* where my fucking best friend is!" Sapnap yelled.

George stared at him.

"You're-"

George wheezed and tears welled in his eyes.

*You're best friend.*

"No." George sobbed, eyes searching Sapnap's face. The part of his face that he could see. While his mouth was covered with material, his eyes were narrowed and trained on him. And George saw them for the first time. He knew those eyes. They've been angry at him before.

"No. Not you." George sobbed softly, closing his eyes.

*Nick.*

*Sapnap is Nick.*

Nick is the one whose civilian life is being taken away. Nick is who Phil chose to take the Diamond.

"GNotFound, I'm dead fucking serious." Sapnap said, his teeth bared, axe inching closer to George's stomach.

"I'm so sorry." George's voice broke, as he stared up at the superhero standing over him, the tears in his eyes hidden by his goggles. *That this has happened to you. You... of all people.*

"What?" Sapnap stared down at him, confused at the lack of fighting back.

A click came from nearby right, and in less than a second, a sword was struck beneath the axe, flicking it up away from George's stomach. The momentum making Sapnap take a step backwards.

Dream pressed the sword further against Sapnap's axe, forcing him back away from George, and he took a stance between them, teeth bared.

"Get the fuck away from him." Dream seethed.

George couldn't breathe at all.

"I wasn't going to hurt him." Sapnap took a defensive stance, flipping away his axe into the coin and holding his hands up in surrender. Dream pressed the tip of the sword against his chest.

"Why did you have your axe to him, why was he on the ground. Why were you yelling!" Dream was yelling now too.

"Dream-" George wheezed but didn't get up.

"He wouldn't tell me where George was! And he left Clay Block in a random alleyway hurt! He's fucking selfish, and I'm rightfully pissed! I wasn't going to hurt him!" Sapnap said.

"How. *Dare* you." Dream's eyes flashed.

"Dream." George's head pounded.

"You dare call him selfish." Dream pressed the tip of the blade further against Sapnap, who was forced to take a small step back. "You have NO IDEA what he fucking sacrifices for this city."

"Dream." George reached forward and grabbed his ankle, doubling over as his world became fuzzy. "D-Dream, help."

Clay clicked away his sword immediately and dropped to George's side.

"Geo- G." He put a hand on his back.

"C-can't breathe." George sobbed, a hand over his heart and the other reaching for Clay, who grabbed it and intertwined their fingers.

Clay had never seen G panic as much as he was right now. He wasn't even quite sure what set it off.

But this was George. And Clay knew George well.

"It's ok." He whispered to him, rubbing circles on his back. "Listen to my breathing, alright?" He took a purposeful deep breath.

George shook his head.

"No. No. I-I can't d-do this." George leaned into Dream. "I've ruined e-everything."

Sapnap stood near them, watching with slight guilt in his eyes.

"You haven't ruined anything, G." Clay whispered, brushing the dark hair out of G's face before continuing to rub circles on his back.

"I did."

"No." Clay shook his head, swallowing the lump in his throat. He knew what George was panicking about now. "You haven't. You could never." He pulled George closer and took a deep breath. "Copy my breathing."

"I can't go back." George cried, and Clay closed his eyes. "I can't be my civilian self again. There's nothing left for me."

"G..." Clay chewed on his lip, because *now* he understood.

When George was never home, when he was supposedly hiding. He was transformed. The past few weeks, the plan him and Phil had. It was just George being GNotFound. For hours on end, for days at a time.

Anger was an ugly feeling. One that had driven Sarnap to raise his axe at GNotFound. And now it was one for Clay to hate Phil.

"Dream. Help me." George clung to him.

The blue pendant flashed twice.  
Five minutes.

"I've got you." Clay whispered, taking several deep breaths which was also an attempt to cool his anger towards Phil.

"Please don't leave me. I can't lose you too." George sobbed. "You're all I have left." He whispered.

"I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere. I promise." Clay kept his eyes closed. "I'm right here."

George stopped rambling, and finally tried to copy the breathing. It was difficult, when Dream's own breathing was not as slow as he had hoped.

After a minute, George had calmed down enough to pull away from Dream, curling in on himself and putting his forehead on his knees. But Dream didn't move the hand from his back.

"GNotFound... I'm sorry-"

"Don't." Dream growled at Sarnap. George looked up.

"It's fine." George pulled further away from Dream and stood up, looking at Sarnap. The hero was avoiding eye contact, flexing his fingers. "You're still mad."

"Yes." Sarnap looked at him. And George could see *his* eyes.

Dream stood between them.

"Why are you transformed?" Dream asked Sarnap.

"I am needed whenever George is in danger, that's my job from L. George was at the ice skating rink, so now I am here." He said.

George wanted to cry.

*Nick.*

"G, you need to go. Your pendent flashed twice." Dream said, hand on George's shoulder.

"For using his shield to supposedly save Clay and George. But I would like to see that George is safe myself." Sapnap said, staring pointedly at the blue hero.

"That's not happening, Sapnap." Dream said.

An explosion from below, and the roof shook. George ran to the edge of the building again and looked around.

"The villain's gone." He closed his eyes. "Fuck. What have I done."

"It's not your fault-" Dream went to grab his arm, but George pulled away, turning to face them both.

"Ok. I-" He tried to take a deep breath, but he still just wanted to cry. "I have to transform back. But you guys..." He looked at Sapnap and hit back his words.

"What? What should we do?" Sapnap asked, eager for instructions.

George took a few deep breaths through his nose. It's Nick. It's Nick, a teenager, his best friend, a kid. He has a little sister, he has a near-boyfriend. He goes to school, plays video games, organises hang-outs with friends. He listens to everyone, he cares for everyone. He is loyal and confident and kind and trusting. So, so trusting. And loving. He has too much love and forgiveness in his heart. Too much that he gives to George.

"I'm going to be sick." George closed his eyes, and Dream gripped his bicep.

"What?"

"Fuck." George felt like the world was spinning.

"Go detransform. Me and Sapnap have got this." Dream said softly to him.

"I can't detransform." He swallowed. He can't. He can't be George at a time like this. He can't be weak.

"You have to. Your Sapphire." Dream said gently, squeezing his arm.

George shook him off, and turned to Sapnap. "Ok. Sapnap, you-"

He couldn't look at him anymore.

"Yeah? What do I need to do?" Sapnap asked. George took a deep breath.

"Give me your Diamond."

"What!" Both Sapnap and Dream yelled, and Sapnap took a step backwards.

"Give it to me." George pulled away from Dream, stepping towards Sapnap.

"What? Why? No, you can't take it." Sapnap was worried now.

"G... what?" Dream said.

"You can't have it. You can't." George gritted his teeth and held out a shaky hand. Sapnap shook his head, stepping back further.

"He's not GNotFound. There's no way. He's manipulated! Or a villain has some power controlling him!" Sapnap flipped his coin and held out the axe. "It's why he won't tell me where George is or why he left Clay Block. It's because he doesn't know! And now he wants my jewel. He's an imposter!" He yelled at Dream who was frozen in place.

"I'm not. I'm taking the jewel because you are not fit for the Diamond. You are not fit for the life of a superhero." George looked at the bracelet on his wrist, the clear jewel glistening in the light. "I'm so sorry for what L did to you."

"He's not in his right mind. Dream, do something." Sapnap said.

"G. What's going on." Dream said, staring at George in confusion. He knows this is George. He knows there was no villain interference. But nothing explains why he suddenly turned on Sapnap, why he thinks he's not fit for the Diamond.

"Give me your bracelet." George's hands were trembling, as was his voice. "Or I'll take it myself."

George's pendent started rapidly flashing. He had a minute.

"Fuck no." Sapnap glared at him, and flipped his coin into his axe, bringing it up in front of him. Dream jumped in and met it with his sword. "Dream. What are you doing? Are you out of your mind as well!"

"We can't turn on each other. We have a villain to fight!" Dream yelled in frustration, looking between Sapnap and George, both staring at each other. "Fucking hell, people could be dying, G! Go transform back, me and Sapnap will handle this. Can't we just get this over with and *then* have a *civil* fucking discussion!" He struck his sword on the ground.

George stared at Nick for a bit longer, who was glaring back at him.

"Ok." He said softly, and Dream relaxed. Sapnap was still clearly confused and angry, but he looked to Dream.

"Good. Now." Dream clapped. An explosion in the distance. "Go. Me and Sapnap will deal with him."

"I'll be back in half an hour." George said softly.

"We'll defeat him by then." Sapnap scoffed at him.

"We can handle it, G. Trust us." Dream said.

George's pendent was still flashing, and he ran his hands through his hair anxiously. His breathing was still so fast. And he still couldn't look at Sapnap without feeling ill.

Dream grabbed his shoulders as gently manoeuvred him to the edge of the building, away from Sapnap.

"Everything is going to work out. I promise." Dream said softly.

"I feel like my world is falling apart." George choked. Dream's eyes drifted to George's pendent, glowing brighter as it ticked down.

"Everything is fine."

"Everything is going to change." George stared at him, his eyes watery under the goggles that no one could see.

Clay reached forward and brushed his finger on the Sapphire.

He stared at George, still marvelling over the fact that this superhero was *George*. George was the one who could jump over rooftops, the one with the shield power, the one who has saved him multiple times.

Clay realised how much it made sense, how *perfect* George as a superhero was.

He couldn't think of anyone better.

"Maybe things changed a while ago." He said softly, eyes searching through the goggles.

And this time, he felt like he could see them.

George didn't respond.

"Go, G." Clay quickly clutched the sides of George's head, and pressed his lips to the top of his dark hair, before jogging back over the Sapnap.

George was frozen for a few seconds, before giving in and jumping off the building and dashing away.

"So?" Sapnap asked Clay. "What's the plan."

"We defeat the villain before G even has to think about coming back." Clay said, clicking his pen once more.

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"Drop your jewel and no one has to get hurt." Clay yelled.

"Where's the fun in that? Give me *yours* and no one *else* will get hurt." He threw a bomb onto another building, it exploded on impact and Clay's eyes went wide at how far he could throw.

It wasn't going well so far. Neither him nor Sapnap could get close to the villain. He had too many bombs.

They were currently standing on top of the city hall. The one where prom was held. The one where Clay tried to kiss George, the one where he was told by the boy he loves that he loves someone else.

George was usually the one with a plan. G always knew what to do.

Clay stood away for a bit, watching Sapnap and the villain fight while he thought.

"Dream? A little help?" Sapnap called, grunted as he deflected a bomb. The roof of the building was crumbling and shaking.

"I'm thinking." Clay responded, swinging his sword. The villain had infinite bombs at his disposal. They had none.

Well, they actually had one.



"Sapnap! Follow me." Clay called, then jumped off the building onto the one beside them. He turned back to see Sapnap follow.

The villain didn't, instead just laughed at them and continued to create and launch bombs.

"You have an idea?" Sapnap asked, panting slightly from the fight

"Yes. Your bolt. It's the closest thing to a bomb of our own, right?"

"I suppose so."

"What would happen if your bolt hit one of his bombs?" Clay asked with a smile.

"Oh." Sapnap thought about it. "Maybe that would make a bigger explosion. But what if it just destroys the bomb entirely? And my bolt is big, it'll make the entire roof collapse and probably knock out the villain."

"Good. That's fine. If it doesn't explode the bomb, at least it'll make the villain fall into the building or fall unconscious." Clay said.

"Do I strike a bomb in his hand? Or mid throw?" Sapnap asked, eyeing the villain who was still on top of city hall.

"Either. But do it before it explodes." Clay said. "I'm going to distract him for a little, using my Projection. When I get him in the centre of the rooftop, then do it."

"Ok. But what if I hit you?" Sapnap asked.

"You won't. I'll jump off the building. One of my projections will stay, so just wait for that." He said.

"How do your projections work? Do you control them?" Sapnap asked curiously.

"Sort of. I give them goals, and then they just act instinctively like I would. They dodge and anticipate things like I would as make decisions that are something I would do."

"That's freaky, man." Sapnap said, and Clay chuckled, and then hit him on the back.

"Alright, see you on the other side." He said, and then took a run up before jumping back over.

Nick watched Dream attack the villain again, and then yell for his power. A second Dream appeared through a weird collection of light and started running around the villain as well.

That power was creepy. The fact that they had supernatural powers was always so intriguing to him, and now he had one of his own, Nick found it slightly weird.

He glanced down at his bracelet, thumb running along its edge.

Why did GNotFound want him to give up the Diamond?

*I'm taking the jewel because you are not fit for the Diamond. You are not fit for the life of a superhero.*

Nick was hurt by that. He knew he wasn't a hero often, but that was because of Phil's instructions. He thought he did well in fights. He hasn't done anything wrong. Has he? Why did GNotFound decide he was unfit?

He heard a particularly loud explosion and a yell, and looked up quickly, clutching his axe tightly in anticipation.

He watched as a Dream jumped off the building, the part of roof he was previously standing on having caved in on himself.

The villain was near the middle of the roof, but not quite centred, as the other Dream faced him with his sword.

Dream was on the ground, Nick had to do it now.

He puffed up his chest and put an arm forward. "Bolt!" He shouted.

The sky opened up at the same time, and a beam of light struck down on a bomb mid-throw from the villain.

The explosion is caused was bigger than any bomb the villain had thrown, and much bigger than the lightning bolt Nick usually had.

The entire building went up in dust and rubble, the villain disappearing from sight. Nick grinned, and looked down at Dream.

The green hero stared up at him.  
And then he started to flicker.

Nick's smile instantly dropped, and he looked back at the explosion.

The Dream on the rooftop was flesh and blood.  
And now he was amongst dust and rubble.

"Dream!" Nick jumped off the building and ran into the cloud of dust.

He jump onto the pile of rubble. The dust was everywhere, and he had never been more jealous of GNotFound's goggles.

"Dream?" Nick he called out, running blindly. He couldn't see two feet in front of him, the dust was still settling.

He heard movement to his right and immediately turned towards it, jogging across the piles of brick and concrete.

He nearly tripped over the villain in black. The man had his eyes closed, but was trying to shuffle brick off his legs. Nick immediately dropped to his side as ripped the pendent off.

They detransformed, no one he recognised. Sapnap pulled the man out of the rubble, and then stood back up.

"Dream!" He shouted. "Fuck."

He lost Dream. He lost the superhero.  
Maybe he even killed him.

GNotFound was right.  
Maybe Nick really wasn't fit for the Diamond.

The dust was finally setting, and he could finally start to see the extent of the explosion. The entire

city hall had crumbled, a massive pile of debris. To think that prom was here only a few nights ago made him feel sick.

Then finally, standing out against the dull colours of debris, was a bright green body.

"Dream!" Nick yelled, sprinting to the side of the hero and grabbing his arms.

Dream's eyes were closed through the holes in the mask. Nick dragged his body out of the rubble.

"Dream. Dream, get up." He said, shaking the boy. He knew he wasn't dead though, otherwise he wouldn't be transformed. But the hero coughed anyways, easing any doubts in Nick's mind that he had killed him.

"Dream, say something." Nick pleaded, grabbing his head. He realised then that his hair was soaked with blood. "Shit."

Dream groaned.

"I'm so sorry." Sapnap said solemnly. "I'm so fucking sorry, Dream."

"Shut up." Dream hissed, lifting his head slightly. Nick grabbed his shoulder.

"Dream."

"I'm fine. Shit." He muttered, eyes opening slowly. He groaned again, and leaned into Nick's body. "My head hurts. My back hurts. My leg..."

"I know." Nick swallowed, keeping pressure on the wound on the back of his head. "I know. I'm sorry."

Dream's ring flashed twice.

"Fuck. Your ring." Sapnap looked at it. "You're going to detransform in five minutes."

"I'm fine."

"But you won't heal when you're detransformed." Sapnap said, eyes growing wide.

"I'm fine. I'm already feeling better. Look." Dream lifted his head again.

"What do I do?" Sapnap started fretting.

"It's fine. Just... maybe can we leave this scene before reporters come?" Dream said.

"Yes, of course." Nick stood up, and picked Dream up as well. He was taller and lankier than him, but Nick was stronger with his powers.

He started running and Dream kept his eyes shut tight.

There were police and already reporters in the area, but Nick avoided them and sprinted away, running for a few blocks.

"Where do I go? Do I go to L?"

"No. Don't. I have to go home once I detransform." Dream said.

"I can't just leave you anywhere! And GNotFound will kill me if I just abandoned you in an

alleyway while you're hurt."

"GNotFound also said to give him your Diamond." Dream scoffed lightly. "His word isn't the bible."

"Right. Then where am I going?" Nick said, slowing down.

"Could you take me to any alleyway in two blocks in that direction." Dream nodded in the direction of the ice rink.

"Ok." Nick changed direction as he sped up. "Do you know what was wrong with GNotFound? He clearly wasn't himself."

"Um. Don't take it personally. I think he just has a lot going on. Probably personal." Dream let his head fall against Sappnap's chest.

"Has he freaked out like that before?" He asked. Dream pursed his lips.

"Not like that..." As G. "But he's freaked out in fights before."

"Yeah, he couldn't shoot straight earlier."

"That's weird." Dream's wince from pain was hidden by his mask. "He's never not been able to shoot. But he's had moments, a lot more recently where he panics because there's so much to do and it feels impossible."

"So when he said he wanted my Diamond, and that I'm not fit. Did he mean that? Does he think I'm bad at being a hero?" He asked, frowning. Coincidentally, Nick's bracelet flashed twice.

"No. I don't think so. You're great at it, you're a natural. I think he feels guilty you've been dragged into this fight without a choice, like we did."

"You didn't have a choice?" Nick asked with furrowed eyebrows.

"Well yeah. We didn't know who L was until *you* literally got your Diamond." Dream said with a small laugh.

"Oh. Well. L did sort of give me a choice. Said I don't have to and stuff, but of course I did. It was my dream to be a superhero." Nick said.

"Oh."

"But, it did feel like there as only one option. I would have felt awful if I didn't accept the Diamond, especially when L explained everything to me. Like now I knew the secrets I sort of... like I felt like I didn't have another option. Even though I did."

Dream's ring started rapidly flashing and buzzing and it made Nick stop.

"Shit." He said, looking around.

"Fuck. My head hurts." Dream let his head roll backwards since it hurt too much to hold it up.

"Dream, what do I do!" Nick panicked.

"Just put me down on the floor. I'll crawl to civilisation." Dream groaned, and tried to roll out of the grip, but Nick held him tight.

"Fuck. Fuck. Shit. Dick. Fucking Fuck!" Nick sprinted down the street. How was it that when he needed an empty alleyway, there wasn't a single one in sight.

He finally found one, and ran into it, taking a relieved breath.

Dream rolled out of his arms onto the floor and hissed when he hit the floor. Nick immediately dropped to his side and flipped him over.

"What the fuck, Dream!" He pulled him up so he was sitting against the wall, but the green hero wouldn't sit up straight, and kept falling to the side, his eyes droopy.

"Dream. You have to hold yourself up, you're going to transform any second. I can't know who you are!" Nick said.

"S' fine." Dream waved a hand. "You can go."

"It's not fine! You're going to literally pass out. Shit. Ok." Nick took a deep breath. "Ok. It's fine. I'll close my eyes."

"You'll transform back too." Dream giggled. "Leave me to sleep."

"I should have taken you to L." Nick swallowed, using both hands to hold you up.

"Probably." Dream coughed, and his head fell onto his shoulder, eyes closed.

His ring flashed bright, and a faint green light absorbed him.

Nick knew maybe he could have looked away, or closed his eyes. But he knew he had to take the hero somewhere better than an alleyway once he detransformed. If the superhero had passed out, with injuries he wasn't even 100% sure about, then a civilian with the same injuries was not going to be ok.

Nick took a deep breath as Dream detransformed.

It took way too many seconds for Nick to realise. He stared at the boy, not registering who it was for a second, too in shock to believe it. The bruises on his face made it slightly more difficult.

Nick's hands tightened on Clay's shoulders. His eyes went wide, and one of his hands raised to Clay's face to examine it.

"Clay." He breathed, heart hammering out of his chest.

Clay was Dream.

This entire time.

The boy was still unconscious, but his injuries were more clear. The back of his head was still bleeding a little, and so was one of his legs. But Nick recalled that he had that leg injury in the alleyway before the fight.

"Clay." Nick squeezed his shoulders tight. "Fucking hell."

"Hm?" Clay hummed, coming to slightly, but his head just lolled to the other side, his eyes still closed.

"Ok, I don't care. I'm taking you to L." Nick said, picking up the boy once again.

"L." Clay responded. "L for loser." He giggled.

Nick shook his head, still too in shock about one of his best friends being Dream.

He sprinted away. Phil's store wasn't too far from here. He just prayed to some sort of God that it was empty and that he wouldn't be in trouble for still being transformed.

As he neared the shop, his bracelet started rapidly flashing. He kicked the door open with his foot, and the jingle of the bell alerted Phil.

The man entered the main part of the store and his face immediately paled when he saw Sapnap with a flashing bracelet and a bleeding and bruised Clay in his hold.

"Bring him out the back now." He ordered, running to the front door to flip the sign to closed and lock the door.

Nick ran through and cleared the long table using Clay's body before setting him gently down. He took a couple steps back, keeping his eyes on the boy's face.

Clay was moving, his head rolling from side to side. He groaned a few times and even moved his arms.

Phil ran to his side, putting a hand on Clay's head where it was bleeding, and also over the leg to check if it was broken.

"What happened." Phil said.

"Clay is Dream." Nick whispered.

His bracelet stopped flashing as he detransformed.

"Dream is Clay." He said, running his hands through his hair.

"Nick, what *happened*." Phil reiterated, grabbing a first-aid kit from a cabinet.

"He..." Nick swallowed and took a deep breath to compose himself. "It was the explosions villain. We were both fighting him on the city hall rooftop. He had the idea to use my bolt to strike one of his bombs before it explodes to make a bigger explosion. I didn't realise that the Dream on the roof was the real one. And he got caught in the explosion. His leg was hurt before the fight though, when the villain blew up the ice rink." He gestured to the leg. "Most of the bruises and cuts on his face weren't from the fight either."

"Yeah, I can tell the bruises are a day old or so. What were they from? It looks like he got beaten up." Phil said, pressing gauze to the back of Clay's head.

"He did. But anyway. His head is the main issue. He hit it when the building collapsed I think. He was unconscious for a bit, but came to. And when I was trying to take him somewhere, he went unconscious again. He keeps going in and out. He detransformed and I had to look at him, I'm sorry."

Clay groaned and reached up to grip Phil's arm.

"Hey, Clay. It's Phil. Can you hear me?"

"Mm-hm." Clay responded, before his arm fell again.

"Concussion. The bleeding is stopping, and the gash is much smaller. I'm guessing it healed quite a bit before he detransformed." Phil said.

"Will he be ok?"

"Yes, he will be perfectly fine. Especially when he transforms back again. In half an hour his jewel will recharge and I'm sure he will be conscious enough by then to transform. Then his injuries from the fight at least will heal."

"Thank God." Nick sat down on the sofa with a sigh, and let his head fall against the back of it, looking at the ceiling. "Are you going to take my Diamond?"

"What?" Phil asked, blinking at Nick.

"I know Dream's identity. That's one of the only rules you set me." Nick ran a hand down his face. "I fucked up. You're going to take the Diamond."

"No, I'm not going to take your Diamond, Nick." Phil sighed. "Yeah, it's not the most ideal scenario but it was no one's fault. You're safe and Clay's safe and that's all that matters. Just don't let anyone know you know his identity. And don't get caught." Phil said with a shrug.

"So you'll let me keep the Diamond?" He asked slowly.

"I can't get another Sapnap, can I?" Phil sent him a smile.

Nick sighed in relief.

"Where's the villain? And GNotFound?" Phil then asked.

"The villain is defeated." Nick held out the black pendent to Phil, who took it. "GNotFound had to detransform. He saved George and... and Clay." Nick swallowed, staring at the sleeping face of one of his best friends. "He used his shield. Also, he was so weird before he detransformed. I thought he was an imposter or manipulated or something. But Dream, I mean, *Clay*, said it wasn't that. He must of had a panic attack or something. But he was being so fucking weird to me, saying I'm not fit for my Diamond." Nick said, a scoff at the end.

"Really?" Phil furrowed his eyebrows as he grabbed a long white bandage.

"Yeah. I don't know. It was weird." He shrugged.

"And are you alright?" Phil asked, tying a bandage around Clay's head before looking over at Nick.

"No. My best mate is Dream, and I had no idea for an entire year." Nick said, eyeing the boy on the table again.

Nick's eyes went wide.

"Wait." He says up. "George was being attacked by villains because the Blade *thought* he knew Dream's identity. Does he *actually* know it. Because George and Clay... they're friends." Nick said.

Phil washed his hands in the sink.

"No, he doesn't know Dream's identity. The Blade is after him because he knows GNotFound's identity."

"...What." Nick just blinked. Phil sat down opposite him on a chair.

"When George was taken by the truth villain, they found out he didn't know Dream's. But he knows GNotFound's."

"George knows who GNotFound is." Nick furrowed his eyebrows. "How? And who is it?"

"Nick..." Phil shook his head.

"Sorry, sorry. But seriously. *What?* George *doesn't* know Dream's identity. But they were friends? How..."

"Clay decided it would be a great idea to befriend George as his hero self." Phil said with a sigh.

Nick stared at him.

"Are you joking?"

"A little. Apparently he didn't intend to befriend him, but it happened anyways." Phil said with a shrug.

"Oh." Nick said, then his eyes went wide. "*Oh.*"

Dream was in love with GNotFound.  
And he also told Sapnap he was in love with George.

Nick's jaw dropped.

*Clay was in love with George.*

"Holy motherfucking shit." Nick yelled and stood up, hands gripping his hair.

"What? What is it?"

"My best friends are fucking idiots, that's what!"

## Chapter End Notes

Again, sorry about the cliffhanger last chapter but it was too tempting.

But oh ho ho we have a triangle of reveals now don't we. Perfect.

I wonder where George went? Hmm.

Also, I got so many comments last chapter I couldn't respond to them all but just know that I read every single one so matter how long or short on every chapter and I really do appreciate them all. I reply late because my week is usually really busy but I love all you guys so much <3



# Damage control

## Chapter Summary

Clay wakes up with a bandaged leg and hazy memories after the fight. But the real issue is that George is, well... George is nowhere to be found.

## Chapter Notes

TW// throwing up (very brief, only two sentences at the end)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"And you don't remember anything after you got here?" Phil asked.

"Um. It's all a bit hazy, really." Clay thought about it, flexing his bandaged leg. "I remember talking to Sapnap and him carrying me. I think I vaguely remember a little bit of you talking to me but that's it."

"So nothing about how you got here?"

"No. I'm assuming Sapnap brought me. He got me here before I detransformed though, right." He asked nervously.

"Yep." Phil turned away to the sink to get a clean rag. "Sapnap had to go transform back as well. And then I had to wait half an hour until your ring went back to white and got you to transform so you can heal." Phil explained.

"And now I'm fine?" Clay asked.

"Pretty much, I think. Although you know it wasn't going to heal any injuries you didn't get in the fight."

"Yeah." Clay examined his leg. His calf was bandaged now. Phil didn't think it was broken or anything, just cut.

"What happened to your face?" Phil gestured at him.

"Oh. Um."

"Is it to do with the stories of you running away from home?" He asked knowingly.

"Sort of." Clay shrugged. "I don't... I don't want to say anything about it yet."

"That's fine. If you need anything, let me know." Phil said.

Clay just nodded. He felt simmering anger beneath his skin, itching to come to the surface. This was the man that was encouraging George to waste his life.

"If someone were to find out my identity, what would happen." Clay asked, ignoring how mad he was, because Phil couldn't know why. He certainly did not want to tell him that he found out GNotFound's identity. Although he did want to know the consequences.

Phil blinked.

"Why..? Do you... think someone knows your identity?" He asked carefully.

"No. But like. *If*. Say it was like... GNotFound or Sapnap. You always said we can't know. Would it be bad if we did?" He asked.

"The reason you can't know each other's identity is because if you get caught, and are forced to reveal your name and face. Then at least there is still another hero who can do something. If say, GNotFound knew your name and his, then if he gets caught, we lose you both." Phil said.

"Ok, I know *that*. You've explained that a lot. But what if it was unavoidable. Like if I'm stuck and detransform in front of him. Or if G would have died if I didn't transform to save him... or something." Clay asked.

Phil narrowed his eyes.

"Why are you asking?"

"I'm just wondering. Like what would you do about it?" Clay pressed further.

"I guess there's not much I can do." Phil sighed. "I would be furious if it was for a stupid reason. But if it was necessary, then obviously I can't be mad. It just makes things more difficult."

"So it's not like you'd take my jewel if I knew GNotFound's identity." Clay said.

"Should I?" Phil asked with furrowed eyebrows.

Clay blinked.

"No." He said slowly.

"What do you think *would* be a good idea on my part then. If I found out that you know GNotFound or Sapnap's identity, what should I do?" Phil asked curiously.

"Um..."

"Why did you mention taking your jewel? Like as punishment? Why?" Phil asked.

"Well..." Clay felt awkward now. "I don't know. Like, I guess you gave us our jewels it feels like you could just take them if you chose to. And one of us knowing another's identity is a safety risk I guess. I used to think you'd take my Emerald and find a new Dream."

Phil was silent for a second.

"You know what, that is excellent point."

"It is?" Clay's eyes widened slightly.

"Yeah. I think if any of you found out about each other, I'd have to take your jewel." Phil shrugged walked to the table that Clay lay on before to wipe it down.

"Seriously?" Clay stared at him.

"I mean, you raised some good points there." Phil said, eyeing him. "But it's *not* an issue right?"

"What?"

"I mean, *none* of you know each other's identities. So it's not something you or I need to worry about." Phil said. "Right?"

"Yeah. Of course." Clay stood up.

"Great. Just don't find out each other's identities. And there is no problem then." Phil smiled.

Clay rocked on his heels for a moment.

"Do you have my phone?"

"Oh, yes. I imagine it's probably blowing up. You've been missing since the start of the fight probably. And for almost an extra hour after it." Phil said, grabbing the phone from the table and passing it over.

Clay's eyes went wide and he quickly switched on his phone, which was swarmed with calls and messages.

"Shit." Clay held his phone like it was burning him. "What do I do?"

"Just say you went to the hospital or something." Phil said, gesturing to his leg. "I think I did a good job."

He noticed multiple missed calls from Drista.

"I have to go." Clay said, looking at Phil.

"Ok. Do you need a lift somewhere?"

"No, it's fine. Thanks for helping."

"It's the least I can do. Your friends all went home according to Tommy, who is fine but also worried about where you are. Maybe just shoot them all a text letting them know to ease their minds."

"Will do. Bye Phil."

He left the store and began to walk down the street towards the mansion.

He got halfway down the street before remembering he got kicked out, and turned around. He was limping slightly, from his leg and hip, and he still had a bit of a headache but he was fine.

He walked, well, limped, for several minutes but already decided he needed a break to sit down. Thankfully the school was just up ahead, and there were benches at the front that he could sit on by the road.

He decided to call Lorna or somebody to pick him up. He wanted to accept Phil's offer for a lift home, but he was secretly still angry at Phil.

Angry at Phil for the plan him and George had come up with. The amount of hours George has

been off the grid, and the number of times Clay's seen GNotFound doing nothing. It was a horrible plan, one that he was sure was hurting George emotionally.

When Clay finally sat down on the bench, he went through a lot of his messages, people asking where he was after the fight. He realised then that he didn't have Lorna's phone number.

So he called back Drista.

"Clay!" Drista's voice immediately came through when he called her.

"I'm ok." He said, and he could hear the breath of relief on the other end.

"Where are you? Are you hurt? Why didn't you call? Are you ok?" She bombarded him with questions.

"I'm ok. I hurt my leg and went to a Doctor to get it bandaged. I was distracted and I'm sorry I couldn't call." He said.

"You scared me so bad. No one knows where you've been." He could hear through her voice that she had been crying.

"I'm sorry. I'm coming home now." He said.

"Home as in George and Lexi's, right? Not the mansion." She said.

"Yes, Drista." He said softly. "Wherever you are is my home."

"And you." She said back, in the most serious tone he had ever heard from his younger sister.

"Yeah, it's Clay." She then said slightly away from the phone. "Lorna wants to talk to you." She said back to him.

"Sure." He waited as the phone got passed over.

"Clay, sweetie where are you? Are you alright?" Lorna soft tone made him feel slightly less tense.

"I'm ok. I'm at the school. I was walking home but I hurt my leg earlier and it's still painful." He said.

"I'll come pick you up. Just wait there and I'll be a few minutes, ok?" She said.

"Thank you." Clay breathed.

"Of course. See you soon, ok?"

When they hung up, Clay sighed and lifted his leg onto the bench, examining the bandages. He was lucky his leg didn't break from the impact at the ice rink.

He briefly touched the bruise on his hip and winced. If only transforming could heal injuries he sustained as a civilian. It would make his life so much easier.

After a few minutes of waiting, Lorna's car finally pulled up, and the passenger door opened the second the car stopped. Drista bolted over to him, and he stood up as she embraced him tightly.

"Hi." Clay hugged back.

"You're such an idiot. Why didn't you message me." She pulled back, glaring at him but with relief in her eyes.

"I'm sorry." He said, seeing Lorna get out and walk over as well. "I hurt my leg at the rink and GNotFound saved me and he took me to a Doctor to get it bandaged. It's not broken, and the bleeding's stopped." He said. Lorna looked down at the bandages.

"Can you walk on it?" She asked.

"Yeah. It's just a bit sore." He said, but he was clearly leaning on Drista for support.

"We can give you some pain killers when you get home." Lorna said, opening the front door for him to limp to with Drista's help. She got in the back seat, and didn't complain about not getting shotgun for once.

On the drive home, Clay kept his phone shut off, answering questions about the fight, what happened to his leg, how GNotFound saved him *and* George. The two were horrified when they found out how he hurt his leg.

"Is George home?" Clay asked then, realising he hadn't heard from the boy.

"No, actually." Lorna's eyebrows furrowed. "I assumed he was with you somewhere, maybe in hiding. But..." She pursed her lips. "When did you last see him? You said GNotFound saved him too?"

Clay sat up straight, paling slightly.

"I haven't seen him since..." He recalled GNotFound jumping off the building. "Since we were saved, and GNotFound took me to a Doctor. George was fine so he went to go... find our friends and hide."

"I'll give Nick a call then, maybe he will know." Lorna said, slightly worried.

"Lexi messaged Nick earlier about George and Clay. He said he was sure they were fine, that you probably got out and went to hide." Drista chimed in.

"Well, George went to hide."

"And you don't know where?" Lorna asked.

"No. But I'll give them both a call as well when we get home." Clay said, then looked at Lorna. "I also realised before that I don't have your number." He added shyly

"Well we need to fix that, don't we." Lorna smiled.

•

Clay was greeted by Lexi and Mark when they got home, who both immediately expressed concern for Clay. He assured them he was fine, and Lorna helped him up the stairs to the bathroom cabinets.

"You don't have any allergies right?" She asked, opening the cabinet and rummaging around.

"No, I don't. I'm fine with any painkillers." He shrugged. He saw her push an orange bottle to the side and he noticed George's name on it. "Is that George's sleep meds?" He pointed, as he realised how rude it was to ask that.

"Yes. We might need to get a refill because we are quite low." She said, picking it up for a second, in thought. Clay bit his tongue. That would be a waste.

"Here we are." She pulled out a packet and popped out two of the pills, filling a glass with water and handing them to him.

"Thank you, Lorna." He said as he swallowed them.

"You're welcome. Now go lie down in George's room. I can pull a mattress for you to actually sleep on if you two didn't want to share a bed again, but it's up to you." She said, grabbing the glass back from him.

"I mean, I don't mind. It's up to George." Clay said, but he definitely would prefer being in the same bed. Maybe George would play with his hair again.

He went back on his phone as he walked to George's room, and clicked on his contact.

But the call rang out, with no answer.

He sat down on the bed and stared at his phone for a few seconds. Why didn't George answer?

He quickly sent a message to the group chat letting everyone know he was home safe. He received a reply from just about everyone, and then a call from Nick.

"Hey, Nick. I was just about to call you actually." He said.

"Clay! How are you?"

"I'm good, are you and everyone else ok?"

"Yep, we are all completely fine. What happened with you?" Nick asked innocently.

"Oh. Um. GNotFound saved us, and he took me to get my leg fixed and George to hide. You know." Clay laughed nervously.

"Yep, I know." Nick said with a smile.

"You didn't think we were dead?" Clay asked, puzzled. Because if he saw two teenagers in a crumbling building who didn't show for over an hour then he'd assume they were dead too.

"No, of course not." He scoffed. "As if you guys would just die. The police said there were no bodies in the ice rink collapse so I assumed you had both been saved." He explained.

"What happened to George, though? Have you heard from him? No one has since he went to hide." Clay said.

"Oh. No, I haven't. Why wouldn't he respond?" Nick asked, genuinely confused.

"I don't know. The fight ended an hour ago surely he knows it's safe." Clay said, running a hand through his messy hair.

"He hasn't answered my messages either. Shit, what if the Blade found him?" Nick asked.

Clay froze.

"There's no way. He was... he went to go hide." He saw George jump off the building but he has no

clue what happened after that.

"Could you let me know if he does get home? I'll keep calling him."

"Yeah." Clay swallowed. "Will do."

"We can go looking for him if we don't hear anything soon." Nick said.

"Yeah."

"It'll be ok, Clay. George is fine, I'm positive." Nick tried to reassure him, but Clay wasn't too sure.

"Right." He croaked out.

"Clay." Nick patiently. "I know how worried you are about him. I know how much you... *care* about George. But it's George, alright? He can get through anything." He said.

"Mm-hm." Clay stared out the window.

"I'll talk to you soon."

"Bye, Nick."

George still hadn't returned home in the next hour. Clay sat on the bed anxiously the whole time. He sent multiple texts and called George many times, but no response. He also called Phil, posing the question as though he thought George was still in hiding. But the man was also just as confused that George hadn't shown up.

*Did something happen.*

*Did a villain get him.*

*Is he avoiding me.*

Unfortunately all seemed equally likely.

If he didn't get a response soon, he was going to transform and find him.

•

Nick was pacing through the entire house, phone clutched in his hand. He had called George too many times to count.

He even called Phil, demanding where the hiding spot that GNotFound takes George is. But Phil wouldn't tell him, and said George should have left it by now.

No one knew where George was.

Nick's family was out, his younger sister had some school play so he was alone in his room.

So when he heard a knock on his front door, he nearly shit himself.

But he bolted downstairs because of the reminder that it could be George. In fact, he was almost certain it was George. Who else would knock on his front door at this time with no warning?

"Geor-" He swung open the door, but stopped immediately when he saw that it was in fact, not George.

GNotFound stood there.

"GNotFound? What are you doing here." Nick said, stepping backwards. GNotFound walked into the house. Even though Nick couldn't see his eyes properly through the mask, he could tell the hero was staring at his eyes.

"Do you know where George is? He's missing and hasn't called anyone back." Nick said.

GNotFound didn't say anything.

"Why are you here? At my house?" Nick took a further step back in confusion.

GNotFound's head lowered slightly, and Nick followed the gaze of his goggles.

They fell onto his bracelet.

Nick immediately grabbed his own wrist, covering it, and took multiple steps back.

"Sapnap." GNotFound said, voice slightly shaky.

"I don't know what you're talking about. Sapnap? What about him? What are you doing here?" Nick started to panic.

"Give me the Diamond." GNotFound held out a hand.

"What?" Sapnap put his hand with the bracelet behind his back and kept walking backwards.

"Nick. Give it to me." GNotFound said through gritted teeth.

"Fuck no." Nick shook his head adamantly. "How do you know who I am?"

"If you don't hand it to me willingly, I'm going to take it."

"GNotFound, *why*?"

"You are not fit for the Diamond. You don't deserve this life."

"Yes I do! L gave me my bracelet! He chose me! I'm the best fit for it. You can't take it away from me." Nick turned and sprinted down the hallway to the stairs and ran up them.

He ran into his room and slammed the door shut behind him, breathing heavily. *There's no way that's GNotFound.*

He scrambled to pull out his phone, to find Phil's contact.

"Nick."

He screamed and spun around. The blue hero was in his room, the window wide open. He backed up until his back was against the wall, and GNotFound started approaching him.

"No! You're not GNotFound!" Nick yelled.

"I am." He said softly.

"You're manipulated! You're a traitor! Tell me where George is! Where did you take him?"

"I'm not a traitor. And I'm not manipulated." GNotFound reached for his arm, but Nick was



holding his bracelet tight onto his wrist.

"Please." Nick begged, as GNotFound pried his fingers off.

"This is for your own good." He said, not looking Nick in the eyes now, as he found the clasp. Nick was trying to pull away, or to punch him or kick. But the hero was stronger, and his weak hits were doing nothing.

"No it's not!" Nick felt tears pricking his eyes.

The bracelet came undone with a click, and GNotFound pulled it away.

The previous blank white bracelet now had a bright Diamond shining in the light the second it was taken from Nick's skin.

"No!" Nick reached for it, but GNotFound pulled away, stepping back.

"I'm sorry." GNotFound said.

"*Please.*" Nick was going to cry. "It's mine. I'm Sapnap. I haven't done anything wrong. Please tell me what I did wrong."

GNotFound didn't answer.

"Why are you doing this?" Nick sobbed as GNotFound walked back to the window.

He paused there for a moment.

"Because I care about you." He whispered, and then jumped out of the window.

•

"Phil, what is it?" Clay asked, sitting upright the second he revived the phone call. "Have you heard anything about George?"

"Clay, it's about Sapnap."

"What?" Clay deflated slightly. "What about him?"

"GNotFound took his Diamond."

Clay's eyes widened and he stood up. While this was thoroughly confusing and worrying news, he couldn't help but be relieved. Because that meant he knew George was ok, he wasn't taken by the Blade.

"What?" He asked.

"GNotFound found out his identity somehow. He went to his house when Sapnap was a civilian and took his bracelet." Phil sounded angry.

"Why would he do that? How did he find out his identity?" Clay's memory went back to the fight.

*"Give me your Diamond."*

George knew who Sapnap was then. That was why he said that. But it still doesn't explain why he would take it.

"You were asking me questions at my shop. About what I would do if I found out you knew someone's identity. Did you know GNotFound knew Sapnap's? Do *you* know Sapnap's?"

"No. No I have no clue who he is. And I didn't know G knew. Why would he take the Diamond? Have you spoken to him?"

"No. He won't respond to my calls."

*Ah. Because George isn't answering anyone.*

"I don't understand."

"We need to get that Diamond back. Sapnap thinks GNotFound is manipulated." Phil said.

"He's not. I swear it. At the fight before he had to leave he was asking for his Diamond too. He didn't once ask for my ring. And he was having a panic attack. He was not manipulated, he was just G."

"I trust that he's not manipulated. But I still want the Diamond back. GNotFound should not be holding two out of the four precious jewels. If he gets caught then all the Blade needs is yours."

Clay took a deep breath, processing everything.

"It's a good thing he doesn't know your identity. Otherwise the Blade would have access to all four." Phil added.

Clay sat back down on the bed.

One of the reasons he could never tell George who he was.

"I'll find him and talk to him."

"If you do, make him detransform and go fucking home." Phil hung up. It was clear the man was frustrated.

Clay let himself fall down so he was lying in the bed, staring at the ceiling, phone still in his hand and his hair falling across the pillow.

"I'd give up my Emerald just to see what's going on inside your mind, G." He whispered to nothing.

•

Once Clay was sure the rest of the household was asleep, or at least in their rooms, since everyone was worried about George, he got up and went to the window. He's seen the boy sneak out before, he goes onto the tree.

This may prove difficult given his injuries, but Clay knew he shouldn't transform until he got away from the house.

Opening the window made a rusty squeaking noise, but it thankfully wasn't too loud. It was a bit difficult, manoeuvring his leg over so he was sitting on the ledge. Thankfully he had long arms and legs and could just reach out to the branch. He may have to jump and trust the thick branch would be able to hold him.

With some effort and grunting, he made it into the tree, and now had to figure out the most feasible way down without falling.

He heard a clang, and it made him practically jump out of his skin. He almost fell but he held tight onto the branch.

His head snapped up to the roof, where the sound came from. And a pair of wide eyes stared back at him.

"George!" Clay exclaimed, a smile of relief etching onto his face.

George's watery eyes stared back for a moment, before he looked away and closed his eyes.

He had been sitting on the roof of his own house after taking Nick's Diamond, just staring at the stars and regretting all his life choices.

George hated Phil for giving Nick the Diamond.

He hated how his best friend had to deal with the weight of the city on his shoulders like he does.

But George fixed it.

He had spent most of the afternoon trying to calm down his panic attack. He had so many missed calls and texts but he felt sick at the thought of talking to anyone. He was dreading ever showing himself as either of his identities again. Neither felt safe anymore. Neither felt like himself.

But he couldn't stand being in his hero suit any longer. Even though being in his own skin felt just as bad.

He couldn't go inside the house. He didn't want to see Clay. Now that Clay knew who he was.

George wanted to throw up at the thought of looking at that boy. Talking to him. Having the conversation they most definitely needed to have.

*I should have faked my death.*

A dark thought that he had had earlier, but a stroke of genius. When he ran into the ice rink to save Clay, the only person that knew where he went was Clay. No one else saw him, he may as well be dead. But he hated that his first thought was to fake his death when trying to run away from his problems.

But it was too late anyways. He knew Clay wouldn't let anyone think he is dead. And he couldn't do that to his family.

Plus there was the issue of Clay seeing him right now.

George was hugging his knees to his body, chin resting on top as he tried to convince himself that maybe Clay wasn't really here, didn't really see him.

He couldn't run from this. He knew that.

"Oh, Georgie." Clay sighed, climbing back to the house and figuring out the best way to hoist himself up. It was usually much easier when he was Dream. And when he didn't have an injured leg and sore hip.

He eventually managed to get himself onto the roof as well, and could finally see George properly. The boy looked awful. His face was pink, cheeks damp and eye bags prominent. He was curled in on himself.

"Hey." Clay changed his tone of voice, and knelt in front of him. George bit his lip hard to not

cry. He still had his eyes closed.

Clay reached out and put a hand on top of George's knee, and it encouraged the brunet to open his eyes and look at Clay.

They stared at each other for a moment. George looked near terrified... as if Clay was going to throw a punch, or spit on him at any second.

Clay finally got a good look at George's face. The one without the goggles. The one where he can see his eye colour and eye bags and more freckles and his natural hair. He got to see all of George, and he could still see G.

"Thank you." Clay said solemnly, swallowing his nerves and sitting cross-legged beside his best friend.

George's lip trembled and he took a shaky breath.

"What?" He whispered.

"Thank you. For everything you've ever done for me." Clay slowly reached for one of George's hands, and carefully pried it off his leg. "The whole time, it was you. You've saved my life multiple times. And you've stood up for me to my father. At those meetings." He recalled each and every meeting where G stood up for him. Either when he was Clay or even when he was *Dream*. George was always there, looking out for him and protecting him. More than he ever knew.

He intertwined their fingers, and George let him.

"You've been there for me in more ways than you know, in more ways than *I* ever realised. So, thank you." Clay rubbed his hand with his thumb. "You didn't have to do any of it, but you did."

George closed his eyes again briefly, and Clay could see tears being squeezed out of the corners. The brunet just shook his head because he didn't know what to say.

"When you saved me, and you transformed... it was the weirdest thing." Clay smiled, about to continue talking.

"Clay. Stop." George whispered.

"It was like... like the world had slowed down. It was like everything fit together in that moment. And it fit perfectly. My world fixed itself like a puzzle and it was magical. And the strangest thing was that it wasn't even a shock." He laughed. "You being GNotFound was the only possible option in my mind. I don't know how it didn't click before."

"Clay." George pulled his hand away.

"It's like... in my head... I thought I knew that you were two different people. I think I had convinced myself it couldn't be true. Like I had somehow seen you two beside each other. But even then... my..." *my heart* "my brain always linked you. You had the same qualities and I always saw the similarities, but I brushed them away because it was too good to be true."

"You weren't supposed to find out." George covered his face and his voice was muffled behind his hands. "I failed."

"Today has been the best day of my life." Clay said with a light laugh. "Even though I woke up homeless and hurt... I injured my leg... couldn't find my friends. But it was the best fucking day,

because I finally discovered you."

"Discovered?" George whispered, still trying to hide his tears.

"You were always there." Clay grabbed one of his hands again and gently pulled it away from his face. "I was just too blind to see it."

George slowly lowered his other hand, opening his eyes and meeting Clay's once more. Clay reached forward with his free hand to gently wipe the glistening tears.

"You really have the most beautiful eyes." G. He almost added.

"I've lied to you so much." George said softly. Clay grabbed his other hand as well and clamped them together between them with a smile.

"I'm sure you have. We could compile a list, it would be fun!" He said. *Plus, I'm sure we have a similar list.*

A wisp of a smile appeared on George's face for a second, but it disappeared quickly.

"You can't tell anyone."

"Of course." Clay's fingers traced George's knuckles.

"It's not that I don't trust you. But if anyone found out you even *know* my name, I—" George cringed. "I don't know what I'd do with myself if you got caught in the crossfire."

Clay's heart sunk.

He did the same thing. He brought George into this mess. Even if GNotFound was technically in it already, he still brought George into it, put him in danger.

"You don't have to worry about me." Clay said, pressing a kiss to the back of George's hand. "I can take care of myself."

George's eyes fell to Clay's bandaged leg.

"I'm sorry I didn't come find you after the fight today." George said, swallowing. He looked guilty and pained.

"Oh." Clay said. "It's fine, I went to get it bandaged anyway."

"I should have made sure you were safe. I'm sorry." George said softly.

"Don't apologise. I'm ok, and you're ok. And that's all that matters, right?" Clay smiled. George shrugged lightly, still looking at Clay's leg.

"Do you have any questions?" George then asked. "I feel like you must."

Clay thought about it. He had so many. But he couldn't ask most of them.

"You're being targeted by the villains." He said slowly, trying to phrase his words carefully. George nodded, assuming where it was going.

"It's for knowing GNotFound's name." He took a deep, shaky breath. "The golden villain made me tell the truth, and I revealed I know who it is. And I know GNotFound's name... because it's me." He explained.

"Yeah." Clay knew that now. "So in all the fights... when you go to hide-

"I transform." George shrugged. "Well, I try."

"And the past few weeks? When you have been MIA for hanging out with us? Even though there was no villain?" Clay was frowning now as he anticipated the answer.

George sighed, and looked up at the sky.

"Well... basically... if there's no George Davidson to find, there's no George to torture or manipulate for information."

Clay furrowed his eyebrows.

"So when I'm not at school or eating dinner with my family, then..." George shrugged. "Then I'm GNotFound."

"So you are just transformed, for *hours* at a time?" His assumption was correct.

"Yeah." George said, looking back at him.

"And that week school was cancelled...?"

"I think I forgot who George even was." George said with a small pained chuckle.

Clay's grip tightened on George's hands.

"Clay, you're hurting me." George whispered, and Clay immediately eased up, rubbing his hands instead.

"Sorry, I just... that's awful." Clay shook his head. "What about your *life*?"

"What life?" George let a soft laugh escape, but when Clay didn't laugh, his slight smile fell, and he swallowed. He let go of one of Clay's hands to wipe his face properly. "I already don't sleep. My grades are failing. I don't hang out with friends. I can't go to college."

Clay's heart sunk, and *everything made sense*.

He pulled George suddenly towards him, and he wrapped his arms around him tightly, burying his head in George's shoulder.

George didn't say anything, he just gently hugged back. They both needed this hug.

"Your sleep. Your insomnia. It's because of it isn't it." Clay felt guilty. He didn't get the best sleep at times too, but it wasn't a big issue for him. George just hummed in response. "And when you were upset about getting into Stanford..."

"I can't go." George whispered.

Clay had to blink back his own tears. Because he understood completely. He understood the pressure. He understood the guilt, and being torn in two. He had the same responsibilities. But there was one key difference.

Clay saw his Emerald as freedom.

George saw his Sapphire as a prison.

"I'm so sorry." Clay swallowed, pulling away to look at George's face.

"Sorry?" George frowned. "Why are you sorry?"

"Because..." *I'm Dream.*

Clay closed his eyes for a few seconds. He couldn't.

"Clay." George pressed the pad of his thumb to the corner of his eye, pressing against the tear, gentle on his bruises. "What's wrong?"

"Just... everything." Clay put a hand over George's, holding it against his warm face. "You've had to deal with so much and I never knew."

"That's because I didn't tell you. That's not your fault, you didn't know." George said, a kind smile like Clay was being silly.

"But I..." *I did know. I could have known. I knew you as George and as G but I still didn't see it. Didn't see you.*

He stared at George, eyes flickering to his lips for a moment. And George definitely noticed, because his eyes went wide.

"Um." Clay cleared his throat, and George let go of his face.

"We should probably go." George said, looking at the ground.

"Wait, I just..." Clay waited until George was looking at him again. "Fuck, I really want to kiss you."

George had to bite back his words. He wanted it so badly as well.

"You still like someone else." George whispered.

"But that someone else is-" Clay interrupted, grabbing George's hand, but he froze. He was going to say it. *You. That someone else is you.* He was so close to saying it. And he could of.

But George loved someone else too.

So why embarrass himself further.

Why make George question why he fell in love with his superhero identity before his civilian self.

Why he fell in in love with a superhero at all.

"If you tell me that you don't like the other person anymore and that you only like me, then I'm going to assume it's because you found out I'm a superhero." George said, jaw tight.

Clay shook his head very quickly, grip tightening on George's hand.

"No. No. Nope. Don't say shit like that. I like you regardless of if you have powers or not. I like you because you're George, before I even *knew*."

And maybe that was the best thing Clay could have said. Because it eased his own guilt.

He fell in love with George without knowing he was G. He fell in love with the boy behind the goggles too. His year long question of love-vs-infatuation had been answered.

He wasn't in love with the secrets or the powers or the strength or the mystery.

He fell for the *boy*.  
Twice.

•

"You're such an idiot." Lexi said, seeing George first in the morning and shoving him hard. But then she hugged him, pulling away before he could even hug her back.

"I'm sorry." He said, then looking at his parents. Lorna sighed, and Mark came over to hug him.

"You could have at least texted us." She said, also coming over to hug him and give him a kiss on the forehead.

"I know. It won't happen again." He said.

Clay stood behind him, watching the reunion and thinking about what his own father would have done if he had done what George did.

Well, he sort of did do it. He got kicked out, but neither him nor Drista has had any contact from the Mayor yet.

"Alright. George, Lexi, time for school." Lorna said, patting George on the shoulder.

"What?" All four teenagers said.

"What about us?" Clay pointed at himself and Drista.

"You can't make me and George go to school!" Lexi said.

"I can and I will. And you two-" She pointed at the Block siblings. "Still have stuff to deal with your father. You stay."

"Do we have to think about him?" Drista sighed.

"So much has happened this week can we just have a day off?" Lexi pleaded.

"I'm going where George is going." Clay said, hand brushing the back of George's arm, making the boy's face flush pink.

"I hurt my arm." George said.

They all looked at him.

"What?"

George lifted the sleeve to to show a cut that had most definitely not been addressed at all. It wasn't bleeding, but there was dried blood coating his bicep.

Clay immediately gripped his shoulder, staring with wide eyes.

"George!"

"Why didn't you say something? Come here." Lorna grabbed his other arm and her and Clay pulled George to the kitchen.

Lorna was shaking her head as she went to grab the first aid kit. Clay sat George down on a chair,



and sat across from him, eyes on his arm with concern.

"George is hurt. Guess I can't go to school." Lexi said to her father in the other room.

"What even happened?" Clay asked George.

"Um." George looked behind him at his Mom, who was wetting a cloth. "It was when I ran into the rink." He whispered. Clay gripped his hand tight.

"Why didn't you do anything about it?"

"It didn't hurt until now." George shrugged, and Lorna walked back over, shaking her head as she pulled up a third chair and lifted his sleeve again.

"Not too deep. You're lucky, George." She said, pressing the damp cloth against his arm and cleaning away the dried blood. George winced slightly, and clutched Clay's hand tighter.

"Guess no school." Clay said with a small smirk at George.

"It's certainly not life threatening." Lorna said, but looked at the two boys. "George is still going to school."

"But his arm-"

"Is perfectly fine." She insisted, dropping the cloth and dabbing some dark ointment around the gash that made George hiss. Clay rubbed his knuckles with his thumb.

"Well I'm going to school too then."

"Clay, your leg-"

"I'm sorry, Lorna. But I'm going where George is going." He said adamantly.

Lorna looked up at Clay, meeting his eyes. She stared at him for a moment, and her eyes flickered down at the two boy's intertwined hands.

"If you feel unwell or in pain at any minute you call me and I'll pick you up." She said.

"I promise." Clay said.

She nodded, grabbing a bandage and efficiently sticking it to George's arm before standing up.

"And you don't let this troublemaker out of your sight." She said, ruffling George's hair.

"Wouldn't dream of it." Clay said with a smile, eyes going back to George who was staring at the ground.

Lorna looked back at their hands.

"I'm sure you wouldn't." She looked back up at Clay's face. "I like your ring, Clay."

He stiffened for half a second, and then pulled his hand away from George, touching his plain ring nervously.

"Thank you. It's quite boring but it was a gift." He said with a small laugh.

There was a yell from the living room, and all three in the kitchen immediately got up and sprinted

through the house.

The TV was on, and Mark was standing with the phone to his ear, and the remote in his hand. Drista was sitting on the couch with Lexi standing beside her, all three of them staring at the TV in horror.

Clay and George both turned their attention to the TV as well, and immediately felt their blood run cold.

With his shiny boar mask and long pink hair, wide red mantle and golden crown, the Blade was in the centre of the screen with a smirk.

"This is an emergency announcement." The Blade said. Lorna moved to sit down, but George and Clay stood frozen.

"What's going on?" Lexi said, voice shaking.

"As you are all well aware, this city has been under attack for ages now, and your stupid little mascots haven't done anything about it."

George felt bile rising in his throat.

"I haven't asked for much. Only a simple ring, a pendent and a bracelet, but alas, I have none of those. I am growing tired, as I am sure everyone in this city is as well. You all recall Doomsday a while back? Well, I've been kind since then. I've been patient and reasonable in my demands. But Dream and GNotFound still haven't done anything about it."

Clay gripped the doorway tight, his face as pale as his knuckles.

"So I'm offering a deal. If GNotFound gives me his pendent, Dream gives me his ring and the other one... Sapnap... gives me his bracelet. Then I will not create Doomsday II."

The room gasped.

"I may have been weakened a few years ago, by the one you all called the Liberator. But I am stronger now, and I will not fail. If I do not receive my jewels by tomorrow. Then I will create a second Doomsday. And this time, I will not be merciful."

"So what's it going to be, Dream and GNotFound? Your precious little jewellery and your silly little costumes? Or will you quit playing hero, grow up, and do the job you think you're so good at, and save this city."

The Blade chuckled, a deep and humourless laugh.

"You can try to fight me all you want, boys." He grinned. "But the Blade never dies."

The screen went black.

And George's knees went weak.

Clay caught him around his waist before his legs gave out, and pulled George against his side.

"He... he can't do that, can he?" Lexi said, looking at her parents. Mark began talking fast into the phone. Lorna just had a hand over her mouth.

"What happened on the first Doomsday? No one has ever told me." Drista said, glancing at her

brother briefly before looking to Lexi.

"I'm going to be sick." George mumbled. Clay brushed the hair of his forehead.

"It's ok."

"No." George shook his head and gripped Clay's arm. "No, I'm going to throw up."

He tore away from Clay and sprinted out of the room down the hall.

He barely made it to the toilet before hurling up whatever meal he had last. It was mostly stomach bile and water, and it burned his throat.

A hand was on his back, and he tried to push Clay out of the room but the blonde didn't budge.

"Get out. 'S gross." George said. Clay just smiled and shook his head, another hand pushing back George's unkempt hair.

"Don't care. I'm right here with you."

"I don't want you here." George looked away.

"I know." Clay let his face rest against George's shoulder blade, where he left a ghost of a kiss.

"But I'm by your side, always."

## Chapter End Notes

I feel like everyone can tell that the climax is coming soon. There's not much left to address in this story.

Still several chapters, but... we are unfortunately nearing the end.

Also I changed the summary of the story because it's a long book so it needed a long explanation. People need to know what they are getting themselves into ;)

I will have new dnf stories coming after this as well. So if you aren't already, you should user subscribe to me either here on ao3, or follow me on twitter, where I am just the funniest person in the world (@LottiaraT)

Don't worry though, this isn't over yet. Got much more angst to fit in (and fluff... eventually)

# Broadcasting live

## Chapter Summary

George and Clay go to school, but are interrupted as usual when Phil calls a meeting. Doomsday is coming... and they need a plan soon

## Chapter Notes

TW// guns

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"George!"

A yell from down the hall, making George and Clay both turn. Nick came running over, and immediately engulfed George in a hug. George stiffened the second they came in contact.

"Where the hell have you been and why didn't you respond to anyone?" Nick pulled back and punched George lightly on the shoulder, then turned to Clay and punched him too. "And you! You didn't text me that he was back when you said you would."

"Sorry, I forgot." Clay winced. Nick turned back to George, who was staring at the ground.

"So? Where were you?" Nick asked.

"Hiding out." Clay answered for him.

"Why for that long?"

"Paranoid." Clay said, patting George on the shoulder, who shrugged him off and turned back to his locker.

"Did you guys see the news?" Nick then said solemnly. Clay nodded.

"Yeah. It's concerning." He said.

"The city is split in two. Half the people think the heroes should just give the Blade what he wants, the jewels. The other half stand by the heroes." Nick was watching Clay carefully.

"Really?" Clay said, eyebrows furrowing. He wasn't sure which way he assumed people would lean towards.

"What do you think?" Nick asked, tilting his head to the side, eyes flickering down to Clay's hand for a split second

"Definitely in support. The heroes can't just give up. The Blade wants those jewels for a bad reason." Clay said, and Nick nodded. "You agree with me?"

"Obviously. It's good versus evil. I support Dream all the way." He said.

Clay's smile fell at that, and he noticed George tense up.

"And... GNotFound, right?" Clay said, glancing at George who was just staring into his locker, not moving.

"I don't know." Nick shrugged. "The guy's messed up the past few fights."

"He saved my life." Clay said. "Multiple times." He added.

"Well I think there's something off about him recently. But it doesn't matter. Because I support Dream." Nick said, smiling at Clay.

Clay just stared back.

George closed his locker, and zipped up his bag.

"What about you George? I know your situation is quite different, since your life is being targeted by the villains for... what was it for again?" Nick questioned.

George didn't answer.

"For apparently knowing Dream's identity... right?" Nick said, watching George closely. George shrugged. "So do you support the heroes? Or think they should give up their jewels?"

George cleared his throat, and looked down the hall.

"Honestly, I'm not sure." He said softly.

Clay pursed his lips, seeing George rocking on his heels and fiddling with his bag straps. He didn't really think that, surely. George was a hero. There's no way he isn't sure about fighting the Blade.

"The hell you mean you're not sure?" Nick said, eyes wide. "You think the heroes should just give up?"

"No, I just..." George sighed. "I think maybe if people are going to die, and giving up the jewels is the only way to stop it, then maybe-"

"But that's not the only way." Clay chimed in. "They can fight the Blade, fight the evil. Whatever the jewels are for must be for bad. And the heroes will win."

Nick nodded along.

"The heroes have never failed." Clay finished.

George looked up, glancing at Nick before looking at Clay.

"Yes they have." He almost whispered, and began to walk down the hall.

Clay and Nick looked at each other for a few seconds before quickly following George to math.

George's arms were stiff by his sides, hands in fists. He was staring at the floor, it almost seemed like he was trying not to cry.

Clay reached out for George's hand, but the second his knuckle brushed the back of his hand,

George pulled away like it burned him.

The brunet glanced up briefly to see the look of hurt on Clay's face.

"George?" He whispered, but George looked away, holding his bag strap.

Nick saw the whole exchange, eyes flickering between his two friends.

"I think, um..." George stopped just before they reached the classroom. "I think I'm going to go talk to Puffy." He said.

"I'll walk you there." Clay said. George shook his head, taking a step back.

"No. I want to go myself." He turned and left before Clay could insist.

Clay just stared after George as he walked back down the hallway, until Nick put a hand on his shoulder.

"Come on. You can sit in George's seat next to me if you want." He said. Clay gave in and let Nick pull him in to the classroom.

"What if he isn't going to Puffy?" Clay said as they sat down. Nick shrugged, pulling out his laptop.

"He might be. Seems like there's a lot going on in his head."

Clay just hummed, fiddling with his ring.

"Clay." Nick said with a sigh, and the boy looked at him. "George is fine. I know you're worried about him because you care about him..." He paused for a second. "A *lot*. But he's fine."

"George hasn't been fine for months." Clay said, leaning back in his seat, as Mrs Arley stood at the front of the classroom.

"I know, but-"

"Mr Armstrong, be quiet. Or it's detention for you and the blonde George today." She said, giving Clay a stare as well.

"Yes, sir." Nick said, saluting. The glare he received was enough to kill, but Mrs Arley didn't say anything more.

"So, uh..." Nick continued to speak to Clay after a few minutes. "That person you were crushing on. The girl. How's that going?" Nick asked casually.

"Oh." Clay froze. "Um. Yeah. I mean... they still don't like me like that but it's ok." He shrugged.

"Mm." Nick flicked his pencil around his fingers.

Silence again.

"Me and Karl are great. I've asked him on a date. I'm going to officially ask him to be my boyfriend." Nick said.

"That's awesome! You guys are so perfect." Clay said, and Nick grinned.

“Yeah. I still don’t really know my sexuality but it’s ok.” Nick then said with a shrug.

“It’s not something you need to be in a rush to figure out.” Clay said. “If you know you like Karl, then-”

“Then that’s all I need to know.” Nick pushed down a laugh. “Yeah.” He smiled, and then looked at Clay sideways. “Have *you* ever questioned your sexuality?”

“Um.” Clay looked around briefly, before looking back at Nick. “Yeah. Um. I haven’t told many people, but uh... I’m bisexual.”

Nick grinned and slapped Clay on the back.

“Thank God you admitted it. Was wondering when I could pester you about George.”

“What!” Clay nearly yelled.

“Clay.” Mrs Arley said from the front. He gave a quick apologetic smile before turning back to Nick with wide eyes.

“Dude, don’t freak. I know you like George. It’s obvious.” Nick said with a small laugh.

“Oh.”

“But you still like that *girl* too? Don’t you?” Nick raised an eyebrow.

“Uh. Yeah. Sort of. I don’t know... it’s complicated.” Clay said, still not wanting to correct him. Because he didn’t want to explain who it was.

“Complicated.” Nick echoed. “Seems like everything is complicated now days.”

•

George sat in the beanbag, staring at the table, while Puffy patiently waited across from him, just humming to herself, knowing George needed to collect his thoughts.

He didn't even know where to begin.

"I saw the recent fight on the news. GNotFound wasn't there." She eventually commented, fingers strumming along the edge of her iPad.

"Clay knows my identity." George said.

Puffy's eyes widened ever so slightly, but she quickly recovered and nodded slowly.

"And how did that happen?" She asked.

"He was stuck in the rink, and-" He couldn't say the rest, his throat closed up. He tried to swallow, and closed to eyes like that would help.

"You transformed to save him." She said for him. "And you used your power, that's why you couldn't fight the villain." She wrote a quick note.

George just nodded, trying to control his breathing.

"How did he react?"

George leaned forward and put his head in his hands, taking a long deep breath.

"He was happy."

"Well that's good." Puffy smiled. "That's the best scenario, right?"

"No. Now he's a liability." He looked up and wiped his eyes.

"I don't think so. I think he's another person you can talk to." She said calmly.

"He's not." George adamantly shook his head. "He still says he likes me but he still likes someone else as well and that fucking stings. He got kicked out of his house by his father and he is hurt and injured so I can't avoid him. But things are tense and sometimes awkward when we talk but then the next second we will be sharing a bed, but then he will try to hold my hand and I pull away because I forget that he hurt my feelings. But he talks to me like I'm the only person in the fucking universe and he was ecstatic to know I'm a superhero but even then he still-" George sobbed and covered his face.

"Clay got kicked out of his house? And was hurt?" Puffy sat up straight.

"Yes. He's living with me for now." George whispered.

Puffy wrote on a separate page on her iPad before looking back at George.

"That must be hard. For you. I can't imagine how conflicted you are, when you were already hurt by his feelings but you want to make sure he's ok, and having to look after him while wanting a little bit of space."

"I *need* some space." George emphasised, pulling at the front of his hair.

"There's nothing wrong with that."

"But I can't." He looked up, meeting her eyes through a teary lens. "I can't be apart from him, he has my heart on a leash. I need space but I can't breathe when he's not around." He folded his hands behind his neck.

"Is there any time where you don't feel that? Is there something or someone you can go to, to get a bit of space from Clay without it hurting?" Puffy asked.

George thought about it.

There's one person he can be around that doesn't make his heart feel sick.

"Dream." George said quietly.

Puffy smiled.

"Why do you think it's Dream? Why is he your escape?"

"I don't know." George looked towards the window. It was overcast outside, but no rain had fallen yet.

Why is Dream his escape?

"He's the only one who understands what my life is like." George said. "You *know* what I have to do but he... he understands it."



"You two make a great team."

George felt sick at that again. *Two*.

"Puffy I did something else bad. It felt like the right thing to do at the time but now I feel like I messed up." George looked at her.

"What is it?"

"I took Sapnap's Diamond. I found out who he is, and I know him as my civilian self. And I couldn't stand the thought of him going through what I did. He's one of the best people I know and I can't bear the thought of him throwing away his life. I've lost so much since I got the Sapphire. I don't know what I'd do with myself if I watched the same thing happen to him." George said.

"What did Sapnap say? When you took it?" She asked.

"He was upset. But it was for his own good." He looked away again, tearing up once more.  
"Right?"

Puffy hummed, then checked her watch.

"You know, I don't have anymore appointments until after lunch. Do you want to stay here for a bit longer?"

"Yes please." George sighed in relief, wiping his face.

He didn't want to be near Clay or Nick at all.

•

**L**

Meeting now.

Clay stared at the message, before slowly typing a response.

**D**

I'm at school

**L**

The red and white villain's power, I know what it is. We need a meeting today, because the Blade wants the jewels by tomorrow

**D**

Is G coming?

**L**

He won't respond to me. Not since yesterday. And he wouldn't come with the bracelet even if he did

**D**

Text him what the meetings about, I'm sure he'll come. Bracelet or not.

## L

Hopefully. We don't have enough time for a plan

"Who are you texting?" Nick asked, and Clay looked up at him, shielding his phone more.

"Um. Drista."

"Makes perfect sense." Nick nodded, popping a chip into his mouth.

"I'm going to go find George." Clay stood up from the cafeteria table. He hadn't seen the brunet in History either.

"I can come too, if you want. I'm bored here." Quackity piped up.

"You saying I'm boring?" Nick stood up.

"Yeah. I am." Quackity squared up, shorter than Nick.

"Not again." Karl facepalmed.

"I'm just gonna go." Clay turned and left, thankful Nick distracted Quackity because after he checked on George, he was going to leave to go Phil's.

Even though he found out George was a literal superhero, he still felt the same protective urge over him. He hated the boy being out of his sight. George was still vulnerable on his own.

He walked through the school quickly to the reception, and didn't know what to do from here.

"Hi. Is... Puffy available?" He asked.

"She's been in an appointment since this morning but I'll send her a message." The receptionist said. Clay nodded, walking back to sit down, reading through his messages with Phil.

There was a click of a door a few minutes later, and Clay looked up to George walking out of the room with his phone in his hands, Puffy behind him, and he stood up.

"There you are, George." Clay said with a grin. George looked up, surprised. Clay noticed his eyes were red.

"George isn't feeling too well." Puffy put a hand on his shoulder. "He's going home. Right, George?" She asked.

George hesitated but slowly nodded, looking back down at his text messages.

"Why are you here Clay?" George asked.

"Oh. Um. I was just wondering where you were."

"Did you want to talk to me, Clay?" Puffy asked. Clay looked between the two.

"I'm alright, now George is fine." He said. George sighed and grabbed Clay's hand, pulling him a little further away from Puffy.

"I need to go."

"Where?" Clay asked.

"I have to go to a meeting with Dream and... and our... supervisor? No, that doesn't sound right." George couldn't think of a word to describe Phil.

Clay was relieved that he was actually going.

"Ok. Yes. Go. I'll be here...." He looked over George's shoulder. "Talking to Puffy. You call me when you get back ok?" He said. George nodded and hugged Clay.

"Can you cover for me? In bio?" George asked.

"Um. Sure." Clay laughed nervously.

George pulled away and walked to the receptionist with Puffy's note. Clay watched him as he left, and then felt a presence next to him. He turned to see Puffy watching him carefully.

"You ok, Clay?" She asked, eyes on his bruised face.

"Yeah. I... I'm living with George for the moment." He said. She nodded, and glanced around the room.

"If you need any help, with your father and police or anything, you let me know." She said.

"I will." He nodded.

"Good." Her eyes glanced down at his phone that was tight in his grip. "My office is available but... I have a feeling you're a little busy." She said.

Clay blinked.

"I... yeah. I should probably go work on my assignments." He said slowly.

"Of course. Do you need a note to leave to be able to do that?"

His eyes widened slightly.

"Huh?"

"Do you need an excuse note. Like George." She pulled out a written one from her pocket. "I have a feeling this could be useful."

"Wh-why?" He asked. She smiled and handed it to him.

"Well..." She hesitated, but then shrugged. "I just assume you'd want to leave with George because he is unwell. You two are pretty close. And I know I was supposed to help you and George with your attendance issues." She chuckled. "But I've concluded that it's not a problem anymore."

Clay stared at her for a moment, and then took a giant step forward and hugged her. Puffy was taken by surprise, but she hugged him back.

"Thank you." He whispered, before pulling away.

"You're welcome, Clay. Now go on. Your *assignments* need to be completed."

•

The door opened and George looked up, fiddling with the sleeves of his sweater as he looked at Phil.

The man glared down at him, but then took a deep breath and let George inside. The boy ducked past him and quickly went out the back while Phil closed the door again.

George dumped his bag in the other room, and then went into the main one but didn't sit down, as Phil walked into the back.

"What were you thinking." Phil seethed.

George wasn't thinking. He knew that. When George didn't answer, Phil held out his hand.

"At least return it to me."

"No. You'll give it back to him." George said, clenching his fists and glaring back at the older man.

"Of course I will. Doomsday is near and we need all the help we can get. Sapnap needs it. You need his help."

"Not him." George shook his head. "Why him." His eyes started watering.

"George-"

"No. Tell me why, Phil. How could you do that to my best friend?" George hated angry tears. They burned in a way that normal tears didn't. They set his veins alight.

"Just like I chose you and Dream, Nick showed qualities that-"

"Let me guess. He did one noble thing and you were like *holy shit*." George fumed. "You just picked the first people to show any signs of human decency to throw away their lives!"

"There's no human decency left anywhere, George!" Phil waved a hand around. "There's none. Everyone is awful. No one cares about anything. Don't you think it's strange, the fact that the only people I could find that were actually good, *good* people were fucking teenagers!" He yelled.

"Exactly! We are just kids!" George yelled back with equal fury.

"And you've done a great job!"

"Because we had no choice!"

There was a knock at the front of the store, and they both stopped for a moment, still glaring at each other, chests rising and falling.

"Transform." Phil said, before leaving the room.

George turned and punched a wall, hard, and the photo frame that was resting on the shelf fell and smashed on the floor.

"Shit." He grabbed his hand, holding it close to his chest and clenching his jaw. "Mask on." He muttered.

The door burst open a minute later and Dream ran in, eyes falling on the broken photo frame and

then back at George.

"I heard the smash. Are you ok?" He asked. George nodded, and then turned to sit on the sofa. Dream cautiously approached, sitting beside him. George felt their knees touch and he shifted away.

"The room feels tense." Dream said, looking at Phil who was still standing.

"Funny that." George muttered.

"He won't give back the Diamond." Phil said through his teeth. George could feel Dream's gaze on him.

"I have my reasons."

"And I'm sure they are valid, but..." Dream glanced at Phil. "But we need all the help we can get, G."

"Not him." George said, turning to glare at Phil again. "Anyone but him."

"Why?" Dream asked. "What's wrong with Sapnap?"

"Not him." George shook his head. Clay carefully reached out and put a gentle hand on his shoulder, surprised when George let him.

"It's alright. Phil will give it to someone new anyways. He said if any of us find out each other's identities then he will take the jewel. Well, I mean obviously he won't take yours. You have the Diamond already, so it's fine." Clay shrugged.

George sat up, eyes wide in horror.

"What!" He yelled at Phil, who winced. "You'd take our jewels for knowing each other's identities?"

"Ok..." Phil sighed. "No, I wouldn't. I said that to you to discourage you from doing it on purpose." Phil said to Dream, who furrowed his eyebrows behind the mask.

"I wouldn't do it on purpose."

"Well, knowing you... you're impulsive. I just wouldn't put it past you." Phil said defensively.

Clay tensed his jaw.

He's the only one who has managed to keep his identity quiet. G doesn't know. Sapnap doesn't know. Hell, even George doesn't know. No one knows his name but Phil.

And that stupid word again.

*Impulsive.*

"Give me the Diamond, GNotFound. You know it's unsafe for one of you to hold two of the four precious jewels." Phil said.

"I don't have it with me. And if I did, I wouldn't give it to you. You'd just give it to Sapnap again. I'm not letting that happen."

"Why? What's wrong with Sapnap? What did he do? Who is he?" Clay asked, curious as ever.

"I'm not letting him put his life in danger, or ruin his his normal life as a civilian." George said adamantly.

"But what about Doomsday, G." Clay said carefully. "We need as much help as we can get. Who knows what Blade will do. If it's anything like last time." Clay gestured to Phil.

"No. I don't care. I'm not letting him anywhere near the Blade or near the fighting where he could *die*. I saw what happened in the fight yesterday." George looked at Dream, who winced at the memory. "You almost *died*, Dream. You went down with the building. It was in the news. I'm not letting him get hurt." He sniffled and crossed his arms over his chest. "Not him. He's too... he's too good of a person.

"Who?" Clay said softly. Who did George know behind the mask that he would want to protect so much? But George didn't respond.

And that was a difficult question for Clay to answer. Because he knew how much George cared about everyone. George knew lots of people, and would do anything for practically anyone.

"Personally. I think there would be nothing safer than having a jewel on Doomsday." Clay then said, and George and Phil both looked at him like he was crazy.

"How the fuck would it be safer?" George seethed.

"We can heal faster, and have weapons and powers to defend ourselves and others. If the world was falling apart, I'd rather be a superhero than a civilian with no power at all."

Clay saw George consider that argument.

"But it's not just about protecting ourselves. We have to *fight* the Blade. I can't have people I care about in that position." George said, shaking his head.

"What about you?" Clay pressed.

"I don't care if I get hurt." George scoffed.

"And what about me?" Clay asked softly.

That made George falter. He froze, and glanced at Clay's hidden face.

"Obviously I don't want you hurt." George said softly. "But I trust you not to. You know what you're doing. We make a good team."

"And do you trust Sapnap?"

"With my life, but-"

"Yes, he's not as experienced as us, but he's not failed us yet. He's part of our team." Clay ignored the slip up at the fight yesterday but that could have easily been his own fault.

"He doesn't know what he's getting himself into." George insisted.

"Sapnap knows exactly what he's involved in." Phil chimed in. "He knew before he even touched the bracelet what the expectations are and the responsibilities. He had a choice. He chose to help. And he still wants to, desperately." Phil said.

George stared at him.

"He got a choice?" He asked slowly.

"I explained everything to him before I handed him the jewel. He knew what he was getting himself into, and I said he could change his mind at any time." Phil nodded.

George sat back in the couch, staring at the man, hurt hidden by his goggles.

"He got a choice."

Clay chewed on his lip. He knew what George was trying to say. Because *they* didn't get a choice.

"I wanted to do things right this time." Phil said, looking between the two teenagers. "I messed up with you both. I gave you little guidance, barely any choice, and only a letter. I know it was wrong. I regret that decision every day. And that's why I wanted to change things with Sapnap." Phil said.

The room fell silent. George's hand came up to fiddle with the Sapphire that rested against his chest. He remembers when he got it clear as day. The box in his room. The letter signed by L. The confusion and fear and unknown. The anticipation before the first fight. The pressure on transforming, putting his life on the line with another guy he had never seen before, who's eyes and mouth were the only features he knew.

"He chose this?" George asked in a whisper.

"He did." Phil said.

"Why?"

"He wanted to protect his friends and family. He wanted to help the city. He also just wanted cool powers and an identity." Phil chuckled. "But he wanted to help. He *wants* to help."

Clay watched George, who's grip tightened on his Sapphire as he thought about it.

"I'll give it back. Under one condition." George said, and Clay smiled, looking at Phil only to see nervousness on his face.

"What is it?"

"He never goes near the Blade. That fight is solely for me and Dream. Sapnap never has to fight him or risk his life."

"G-" Clay tried to interrupt, but George put a hand in the air to silence him.

"It's Doomsday. I imagine it won't just be the Blade. He'll have other villains, attacking people. Sapnap can help the people, fight those villains. But he stays far from the Blade. Deal?" George stared intently at Phil, who considered it for a long moment.

"Yes, but only if you are in constant communication with him so you can bring him to the fight if either of you get hurt or you need his Bolt." Phil said.

"Ok." George said, then let out a breath. "Ok..." He swallowed. He already regretted his decision.

"Great. Now that's out of the way. The reason I brought you both here." Phil clapped and got up, walking over to grab a book from a shelf. He walked back over and sat down, flicking through the pages.

Clay looked at George again, who was flexing his fingers and bouncing his knee. Clay reached out

and put his hand over one of George's, resting it against his bouncing knee. George looked up, sent Dream a small smile, and leaned back against the sofa, letting himself relax.

George didn't move his hand away. So neither did Clay.

"Alright. The villain from the other week. He was on the school wearing red and white with a red pendent. You guys claimed he didn't use his power, or at least, you didn't know what it was. But GNotFound swore he saw it flash twice after he had been stabbed by Dream, just before the Blade took him away. We were all so confused by this interaction, especially when Blade stopped all the villains." Phil said.

"Did you find out what the villain's jewel was? His power?" George said, sitting up straight. Clay also was intrigued.

"I did. I believe the villain you describe has the Carnelian." Phil said.

"Does the name of the jewel matter? What's its power?" Clay asked in confusion.

"You recall how the four precious jewels are different to the rest because they have meanings that ring true with the owner and make them more powerful correct? Like how the Emerald is the jewel of intuition and love, and if the wearer is these things, then it fits you, and heightens it. Why Dream is more reckless at times, but it's because he runs on intuition."

"Impulsive." Clay muttered sourly, but it went unheard.

"But regular jewels do not have meanings, and anyone can wear and use them. That's how you guys defeat the villains every time even though you can only use your power once. You're more powerful than those villains in general, and you're jewels compliment each other and you work best in a team." Phil explained.

"We know all this. What is your point?" George asked, waving a hand.

"Well. That's the thing. It's only supposed to be the four precious jewels with meanings. But the Carnelian is unique. It's not like the other jewels at all. And this makes it incredibly dangerous." Phil said.

"Why?"

"It has a meaning. The Carnelian is the jewel of Energy."

"It has a meaning. But it's not a precious jewel." George said in shock.

"Correct. It's the jewel of vitality. This jewel is for people who are energised, courageous, and joyful. It heightens this of course, making the wearer more confident and more motivated and increases their vitality." Phil said, reading from the book.

"So what does this mean? What is the power?" Clay asked, his hand tightening over George's subconsciously.

"It creates energy." Phil said with a small laugh. "So much energy. But the thing about this jewel, is that it works differently to any other jewel, even the four precious ones. It works *with* the precious jewels."

"With?"



"Yes. Its purpose is used purely for the precious jewels. We have been wondering how Blade was able to manipulate multiple people at once. Well. This is the answer." Phil tapped on the book. "The Carnelian's power is Amplifying."

George and Clay stared at Phil with wide eyes.

"That doesn't mean what you're hinting it means, right?" George said, nails digging into his knees. Clay felt George's hand tensing, and saw what he was doing, so he threaded his hand under it and pulled it away, so their intertwined hands were resting on the sofa between them. George either didn't notice, or didn't care enough to acknowledge it.

"The Carnelian amplifies the power of the wearer of the precious jewel. So when he called on his power, with the word Amplify, while in contact with the Ruby, the Blade was able to use the energy from him to use his power multiple times." Phil said.

"How many times can the Blade manipulate someone with it?" Clay asked slowly, nervously.

"Well. That time you saw the red villain, it was only four. And you've fought two at once before. So I don't know the exact number." But then Phil visibly winced. "But at the first Doomsday..."

"No." George said, shaking his head. "There's no way."

"I believe the Blade was *wearing* the Carnelian along with the Ruby at the first Doomsday. He combined them both just how I combined the Sapphire, Emerald and Diamond. He manipulated almost half the city. Granted, there were no other villains, just people with corrupted minds doing evil things. Because you don't need super powers to cause chaos." Phil said.

"But you can't transform anymore after combining jewels. You were in a coma because you wore multiple jewels." Clay pointed out.

"Yes, but I combined three *precious* jewels. He combined one with the Carnelian. That's why he didn't attack for years, he probably couldn't. But he's clearly grown stronger again. And this time, he's been smart about it. Instead of wearing the Carnelian himself, he's got someone else to wear it." Phil said.

"Hold on." George's mind went back to the fight. "None of this explains why the Carnelian villain's jewel flashed twice. And why the Blade was still transformed well after he had used his power. Maybe it explains why he took the villain away to safety, because that jewel is just as important as his Ruby for Doomsday. But not why he just stopped all of his manipulation." George said.

"Like I said before, the Carnelian is very different to all he jewels. It *usually* has no time limit. Except for when the wearer is dying." Phil explained. "And for as long as the wearer isn't dying, it can use its power. And... the wearer of the precious jewel's timer also doesn't go down."

Clay and George's jaws dropped.

"Blade has no timer while the Carnelian is active? Are you serious?"

"Yes."

"Let me get this straight." Clay leaned forward, furrowed eyebrows behind his mask. "The Blade has someone wearing the Carnelian for him. The Carnelian can Amplify his power so Blade can manipulate as many people as he wants. And not only can he manipulate lots of people, but he has no countdown unless the person wearing the Carnelian is dying? So we are going to be fighting him with his infinite powers and no countdown. While us." Clay gestured between him and G. "Are

going to be fighting him with a single thirty-second shield." He pointed at the Sapphire on George's chest. "And my two-minute clone that can't even touch anything. And we have to transform back if we even use them." Clay said.

"You also have Sappnap's Bolt." Phil added. Clay just stared at him.

"You think his Bolt makes it even? How the hell are we supposed to beat Blade?" What are we going to do?" Clay said.

"What did you do the first time?" George asked Phil.

"Well we fought for ages. But I didn't beat him. We both got overloaded by our powers." Phil said with a sigh.

"What are we supposed to do then?" George said, sounding defeated.

"We should evacuate the city." Clay said.

"We don't know when Doomsday is. We could encourage it but how long would people leave their homes and jobs for? Where would they go? For how long? What's to stop Blade from just attacking another city, just so you both go to stop him and fight him." Phil said.

"Then what are we supposed to do? It's hopeless." George let go of Clay's hand and put it in his hair in frustration.

A loud alert from all their phones echoed in the room, and they all winced at the volume.

Phil pulled out his phone with a sigh and read it before rotating it for the heroes to see.

## **ALERT**

**Dream, GNotFound and Sappnap requested at Mayor's office for handing over of Jewels.**

"No fucking way." George muttered as he read it. Clay was shaking his head.

"Does he think we will just give them over?" Clay scoffed.

"Apparently. And maybe broadcasting the purpose of the meeting to the city was to publicise it so you have the pressure of everyone knowing, to show up." Phil said.

"Well we aren't going." Clay said, looking at George, who was staring at the ground. "Right, G?"

George tensed his jaw, then looked up at Phil.

"What happens if Blade gets all the jewels?" He asked.

"I don't know why he wants them." Phil said.

"Do you think it is worse than whatever will happen on Doomsday?" George asked quietly.

"G." Clay stared at him. "You better not be saying what I think you are."

"If Blade is so desperate to get the jewels that he's willing to destroy a city and injure people, there

is no way whatever the jewels are for is good." Phil said, narrowed eyes at George.

"G you aren't suggesting what I think you are. We can't just give up our jewels." Clay said.

"I know." George sighed. "But people are going to die, Dream. And we are keeping these stupid pieces of jewellery, for what? We have the jewels to fight the Blade. But if the Blade has the jewels then we don't need to fight." George said. Clay blinked.

"We can't just give up now. We've been fighting him for so long it would all be for nothing." Phil said.

"We?" George scoffed, standing up. "Last time I checked you haven't done shit except tell us what we can and can't do. This is a decision for me and Dream, Phil. We are the ones who have to fight him, *have been* fighting him, for a whole year of our lives. You don't get a say." George pointed at him.

"G, calm down." Clay stood up too, pulling George backwards a little bit. George had his teeth gritted together.

"If you are going to give your Sapphire to the Blade, then just give it to me instead." Phil stood up as well.

"You'll just give it to some other unsuspecting teenager!" George yelled.

"I would give it to one of my sons." Phil said back, coolly.

"Please. Guys." Clay pulled them both apart further and stood between them. "We can't fucking fight now."

"I'm going to see what the Mayor wants." George started walking to the door, but Clay stood in front of him, stopping him.

"We know what he wants. Our jewels."

"What's he going to do? Grab my Sapphire? Your Emerald? He'd be lucky to still have his fucking hand whether he reaches for my jewel or not. See how he likes it when someone you're supposed to trust hurts you." George seethed. Clay's eyes went wide.

"What?"

"He dared to lay a hand on his son." George pushed Dream to the side to walk through the door. "He deserves a taste of his own medicine."

"He what?" Phil asked, looking at Clay, only just piecing together the bruises and cuts. He assumed he got kicked out, but didn't realise the extent.

Clay still stuck a hand out before George could walk through the door.

"You aren't going to hurt him, right?"

"Only if he tries to take my jewel." George stared back at Dream.

"What if he has like police and guns and stuff. What if he tries to hurt you." Clay said. "Or me." He added a little more softly. He didn't want to see the Mayor. Didn't want to talk to him. Didn't want to be hurt again, it was exhausting enough the first time.

"If the Mayor even tries to breathe too close to you." George poked Clay in the chest. "He will lose an arm."

Clay tried to hide his smile. This was George.

"What?" George asked, seeing him trying to suppress his smile.

"You're cute when you're mad." Clay mumbled.

George shoved him and rolled his eyes behind his goggles. But a light pink dusted his cheeks where the rim of the goggles sat, and Clay noticed, his smug smile widening.

"We aren't done here yet. We haven't got a plan for Doomsday." Phil said.

George turned back around.

"The plan will be what it always is." He glanced at Dream beside him.

"Don't fuck up."

•

"Ok. I think the guns are a little unnecessary."

"They are perfectly necessary." The Mayor responded, and the door shut behind them.

They were in the foyer of the mansion, not the office like usual. And there were a dozen police officers around them, guns loaded and ready.

George stood square facing the Mayor. He felt Dream's presence close behind him.

"Where's the other one? Sapnap?" The Mayor asked.

"Not here. And he doesn't need to be. We aren't giving you our jewels." George said.

"Then why show yourselves here?" The Mayor smirked, and George wanted nothing more than to punch him square in the face.

"Wanted to see what your plan was to take them." George looked at each individual cop. "And by the looks of it, it's quite pathetic."

"We may not have jewels like you, GNotFound, but I know for certain your Sapphire won't save you from a bullet in your head."

"I think we all know the police won't shoot someone unprovoked. Let alone a teenager who has sacrificed everything for this city." He eyed all the police officers.

"Actually, I forgot how little faith I have in the police of the country." George scoffed, eyeing one particular man and the set grimace on his face as he kept the barrel trained on the heroes. "That guy seems particularly trigger-happy."

"We aren't here to shoot anyone, GNotFound." A police officer spoke up from beside the Mayor with a sigh. "Sergeant Williams." He introduced himself, but George didn't acknowledge it. "We just want your pendent and Dream's ring. That's all we want, we don't need an argument, just hand it over."

"As much as I want to stop the Blade, this isn't the way to do it. And even if it was, I'm not letting David Block be the one to hand it over. That's pathetic on my part." George crossed his arms over his chest. "If I ever give up, I want the Blade to just take it from me."

"G." Dream muttered behind him.

"Or you can save us the trouble and give it here now. Save the city and prevent innocent people from getting hurt." The Sergeant said.

"We can't give the villain what he wants. It could be worse than Doomsday."

"Kids, come on." The sergeant sighed. "Just make this easier for everyone. You've done good work for the city, everyone appreciates you. But it's over now."

"No, it's not. It's not over until I'm holding Blade's jewel or he's taken mine from my dead body."

"G, stop that." Dream muttered again.

"Why don't we make this easier and go with the second option." The Mayor taunted. George stared at him.

"I'd rather kill myself then let you be the one to kill me." George said with a laugh.

"Well that makes things less messy for me. Go ahead, GNotFound. I get the Sapphire and the riddance of you without getting my hands dirty. Do us all a favour." The Mayor cocked his head to the side, evil grin more crooked and taunting.

There was a knock on the door behind them, and everyone turned to glance at it, except George who stayed staring at the Mayor with pure fury.

"It's Sam Warden, sir." A cop reported, and the Mayor's smirk fell.

"The fuck does he want?"

"Do I let him-"

"Yes, let him in." The Mayor said gruffly. The doors opened, but George kept his eyes on the Mayor. He was imagining stabbing an arrow into his neck. Maybe into his stomach too for good measure. Right in the face, like he punched Clay.

"Get the camera out!" The Mayor shouted, and George finally turned.

Sam was there with Callahan by his side, and a man holding a camera behind them.

"Mr Mayor, this is not a suitable way to treat our beloved heroes." Sam said calmly, gesturing to the numerous firearms pointed at both the heroes and the newcomers.

"Make then leave. You didn't tell me there was a fucking camera!" The Mayor yelled, and two cops tried to guide Sam and crew out, but Sam didn't budge.

"We have more cameras outside, this is broadcasting live to the city, David." Sam said, and the reporter shifted the camera.

George felt a hand grip his bicep, and relaxed at Dream's touch. He had Dream with him, everything was ok.

"This is private legal matter. Get out!" The Mayor yelled.

"If we are talking about private legal matters then should I bring up your corruption, stealing and black-mailing now? Or maybe that's an accusation for another day, perhaps after the heroes save the city for the millionth time." Sam said with a raised eyebrow. The Mayor spluttered in shock, trying to find words of rebuttal.

"These heroes have done so much for this city. They have sacrificed their lives, their freedom, and their identity for us. For this entire city." Sam turned to look at the camera. "And look what we are doing in return." He gestured to the police and guns, and then to the two heroes standing in the middle of the room, Dream holding tightly onto George.

"Get them out!" The Mayor continued to yell. But George noticed none of the cops move from their positions. He held his breath as he looked at Sam, who made eye contact briefly to send him a wink. Something about his eyes seemed familiar to George, but he couldn't put a finger on why.

"We've put so much faith into these two kids for a whole year. I trust they will do everything they can to help us." Sam said.

"Give me your jewels!" The Mayor yelled, and he grabbed Dream's forearm tightly.

Clay gasped and froze up the second the Mayor touched him. He stared at the man, and couldn't pull away. Just looked at his father who reached for his ring. He watched as the man tried to grab the very thing that gave him freedom from his father. But Clay didn't react. He just closed his eyes.

But George acted instantly, grabbing Clay's hand. "Shield." He said, watching in amusement as the Mayor was flown backwards away from the blue, landing on his back on the hard ground, breath escaping his lungs.

The slight muffling of the now loud chaos outside their bubble allowed Clay to relax his tense body, and he shakily brought his hand to his chest, eyes still on the Mayor who was being helped to his feet.

"Dream?" George was now in front of him, hands gripping his arms. Clay looked down at him, imagining the concerned look in George's eyes behind the goggles.

"Are you listening? Can you hear me?" George said, shaking him slightly.

Clay smiled, and reached out and pushed a stray piece of dark hair back behind George's ear.

"Dream! We need to go." George let go, finally making Clay come to his sense. The room outside the shield was full of yelling. Sam, Callahan and the reporter were thankfully gone from the room. But the Mayor was shouting at the heroes, and the Sergeant was trying to push through the shield.

"It's quite funny when they are just civilians and not villains." Clay chuckled, watching the hopeless attempts at trying to get through the shield.

"Not when you remember it only lasts half a minute and our eardrums will burst when it opens, from his screaming." George gestured to the Mayor.

Clay made eye contact with his father, who was yelling and screaming and punching the shield.

Clay smiled at him, and waved. Safe in the shield. Safe with G. Safe with George. He'd protect him.

"Come on, idiot." George grabbed his wrist and tugged him along with the shield through the room, and he dropped it when they reached the open door, running through it outside.

"Get back here you fucking kids!" The Mayor screamed as they ran to the street.

"Never coming back here again!" Clay called out with a smile, giving a two fingered salute before George tugged him around the street corner.

None of the police came after them. And George had a feeling they didn't even want to.

"Well that was fun." George said with a small smile when they stopped, letting go of Dream's hand.

"Guess you could say that." Clay snorted.

"GNotFound, Dream." Sam approached them, with Callahan as well but thankfully no camera. "I'm sorry about broadcasting live without your permission. There wasn't enough time and the city had to see what was going on." Sam said, reaching out to shake each of their hands. "It's good to finally meet you both by the way." He gave them each a friendly smile.

"And you. It's fine, we are used to being recorded." George shrugged. "How did you know what was going on?"

"Well obviously the alert but Callahan here is quite the hacker." He slapped the shorter man on the back, who rolled his eyes. "He sees any messages sent or received by the Mayor. So he saw him communicating with the sergeant about what he was planning with you two. Not that you needed help, but, well, I thought maybe we could help in some way. Because you are always helping us." Sam said.

"Isn't that illegal? Tapping into the Mayor's messages?" George raised an eyebrow.

"And isn't what he's doing illegal?" Sam said back with a small smile. "But seriously. If there is anyway we can help you both, we will. The city is on your side even if it seems like they aren't."

"Thank you, that means a lot." Dream said.

"Is there anything I can help with? I'm not Mayor yet but I have the resources and support. Anything you both need, and Sapnap too, I can organise it." He said.

George glanced at Dream with pursed lips as he considered the help.

"Can we speak on the news? Tomorrow morning to the city." He said, glancing back at Sam, who grinned.

"Done."

"And do you by any chance have some ear pieces and mics? We need to be able to communicate with each other if the Blade attacks. It would make things easier if we are far apart." Dream mentioned, and George nodded approvingly.

"And done. I'll get you those ear pieces tomorrow. At the news station at 9 you'll do a broadcast. That will be really good, since I think everyone needs a bit of reassurance." Sam said.

"I agree. It also gives us a chance to speak to Blade too." George said. "Thank you, Mr Warden. We really appreciate your help."

"Please, call me Sam. And I'm looking forward to getting to know you both more after you defeat the Blade." He said with a wink, before walking away with Callahan, who waved goodbye to them both.

"Wow." George said, turning to face Dream. "He's going to be a good Mayor. Imagine someone who will actually help us and not scream at us every time we speak." He chuckled.

"Yeah." Clay said, still watching Sam walk away.

"You alright?" George asked in a softer voice, and Clay looked back at him.

"Yeah, of course."

"You kind of froze up earlier. When the Mayor tried to take your ring."

"Oh. That. Um. I just reacted slow I guess." Clay said, nervously shifting where he was standing.

"I told you I wouldn't let him hurt you." George said softer.

"I know. I just... I don't know. I wasn't expecting it." Clay shrugged.

George's pendent flashed twice, and he sighed.

"Well, I'll see you tomorrow at the news station." George said, giving the boy a wave before turning around.

But Clay grabbed his arm before he could.

"Wait. Thank you, by the way. For... for always... you know, like... I don't, with the Mayor. I don't speak up much and I, I know I *should* but even though I don't, just know that I appreciate it. So much. You always, I don't know... stick up for me. I know I don't do it back, I think something is wrong with me sometimes but I just..." Clay sighed. "I've never thanked you for it properly. But I... you... you're just incredible, G. So... yeah. Um. Thanks." His words came out as jumbled as they could be, and he internally cringed at the mess.

But George just smiled and shook his head fondly. He took a step closer and went on his tip-toes to press a kiss against Clay's mask just above his cheek.

When George stepped back, he smiled at the silence from Dream. If he could see the shade of red that the boy's cheeks were, his grin would probably grow.

"There's nothing wrong with you, Dream. And you know I'd do anything for you." George said softly, words so delicate as if they were going to shatter Dream's mask.

"Really?" Clay whispered, wishing he could have felt the lips against his cheek instead of the stupid mask.

"Is that so hard to believe?" George questioned.

"No." Clay smiled. "No, I think I've learnt that now."

"Good. I'll see you tomorrow, Dream."

"See you later, Goggles." Clay grinned. And George turned back with an open mouth.

"Did you just call me Goggles? I thought you finally forgot about that nickname." He said, but



couldn't hide his smile of amusement.

"Well, it's because I'm confident that's what the G stands for." Clay smirked. "G for Goggles. Am I right?"

"Yes. My real name is Goggles. Well done." George scoffed and walked away. "Bye, Dreamie."

Clay watched until he had gone out of sight, smiling all the while.

"Bye GeorgeNotFound." Clay whispered.

## Chapter End Notes

Oh god the chapters are getting longer and longer each time. Well if you didn't like long chapters, you probably wouldn't be at Chapter 53 of this story so I guess you're welcome for the nearly 9k word chapter.

This chapter was a little boring and rushed I think, but it got most of the important info hopefully. I'll probably remember something important in a few chapters time that I forgot to say.

As always, hope you enjoyed :)

## Just in case

### Chapter Summary

George pays Sapnap a visit, and him and Dream have to address the entire city live on TV about the inevitable Doomsday.

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"What do you want?" Nick gritted his teeth, arms crossed against his chest as he glared at GNotFound.

"I don't... I don't want anything, I just..." G was shifting nervously. He sighed and pulled out the bracelet from his pocket, holding it out towards Nick.

Nick didn't move, just stared at the hero with a tense expression.

"I thought I wasn't good enough." Nick said.

"No, you are good enough. This wasn't because of you. It was me and my issues." G said, holding it out further. Nick still didn't take it. "You can have it back. I'm sorry I took it away."

"Why? Why did you take it? Why are you giving it back? I still don't trust you." Nick said, making no move to even look at the bracelet.

"I didn't want you to ruin your life. My Sapphire has changed everything, and I've lost so much. It's fucked up my sleep, it makes it difficult to see my friends and family. I live every second on edge for an alert. I hold too many secrets in my brain that I feel guilty even being with my friends. I lie to everyone, I forget who I am. I didn't want that for you." G said.

"Why do you even care?" Nick scoffed.

"Because you're Nick." G said softly. "I didn't want this for you."

"You know me? Who are you?" Nick said, arms lowering off his chest and tense expression dropping to stare at the limited features of the hero's face.

"I can't tell you."

"How did you figure out who I was?"

"You said you were best friends with George Davidson and Clay Block. It wasn't hard to figure it out from there." George said, sighing.

"Oh." Nick winced. "I didn't mean to say that. Maybe... maybe I shouldn't have the Diamond." He sighed.

"What?" George held the Diamond tightly. "Why not?"

"I gave away my identity. I fucked up in the fight the other day, and Dream nearly died. I'll just

mess up more. Plus you know who I am. And you said it yourself, I don't deserve it." Nick pursed his lips and shrugged.

G reached forward and grabbed Nick's hand, pulling his wrist forward and clasping the bracelet onto it. The jewel disappeared as the clasp closed, returning to its blank state.

"This is the jewel of dependability and trust. I don't know anyone more worthy of it than you. You're the most loyal and dependable person I know, I trust you with my life. Maybe you've made mistakes, but so have I. That's how we learn. If I took your Diamond because you've made some mistakes, then I would be a hypocrite and should give up my jewel too." G held the bracelet onto Nick's wrist as he spoke.

Nick glanced down at the bracelet, realising how much he missed the feeling on his wrist.

"I took it because I wanted to protect you, from this world. I wanted you to live your life. I didn't want you anywhere close to the fighting. But I realised it's not my choice. It's yours. And L gave you a choice, so it's up to you. I shouldn't take away your bracelet just because I didn't get a choice."

"How do you know me? Why do you care? Who are you?" Nick had so many people in his life, and he wasn't sure who would care this much.

"You know I can't say." G whispered.

"If someone had taken your Sapphire, say it was Dream or L. Would you want it back?" Nick asked.

This made G let go of his wrist, hand going to touch his pendent.

"I... yes of course. Doomsday is coming up and it's not enough time to train someone new and-"

"Forget about Doomsday." Nick dismissed it with his hand. "If they took it, said they would find someone new, you can live your life with no stress. Would you have liked that?" He asked.

George thought about that for a minute. Imagining the scenario. He would probably be studying right now, with finals coming. He would have already responded to his offer for college. Maybe he would have plans with friends on the weekend. He could think about graduation and not feel ill.

"No." He said softly. "No I wouldn't give it up."

Because without his Sapphire he would only be George. He wouldn't have the confidence he did now, the ability to stand up for himself. He wouldn't be close with Dream, have that person to go to that he could be someone else for a while. He wasn't judged behind his mask. He could run on rooftops, see sunsets from views he normally would never have seen. And he has something most people don't have. The ability to protect his loved ones. He has powers and a shield and can protect his friends and family and people from harm. He has made an impact on the city, more than he ever would have as George. And he got to meet Dream.

"If you had asked me six months ago." George thought back. "I might have said yes. But I can't imagine not being GNotFound. It's part of who I am, and yes, it has its downsides but it's worth it. I can protect the people I love, I can make an impact on the city. I can know Dream." He smiled. "I don't think I could give up my relationship with him. Nothing would make me do that."

Nick pulled the hero in for a hug, taking George by surprise.

"I'm sorry you didn't get a choice. But the things you have done for city are unforgettable. You've sacrificed so much, but everyone knows that. We know how much work you do. And the entire city is so grateful." Nick said. "And Dream is lucky to have you as his partner. I don't think he would be able to cope if you weren't by his side."

"Dream loves his Emerald." George said, with a slightly sad smile. "He always has. Even when I wanted to quit, he never did. He's always loved being a hero, getting away from his life and he never lets the fights get him down. I never understood that, how he managed to find positivity in everything." George pulled away.

"Why do you think you and him are so different with your jewels?" Nick asked.

"I think Dream needed it. I think this was an escape from something. Maybe at times it felt like my Sapphire took away my freedom. But for Dream... for him I think it gave him freedom."

George clasped his hand over Nick's wrist.

"Which is why I can't take your jewel. It's not right of me to take away something that could be your freedom. And your chance to protect the people you love."

"Thank you GNotFound." Nick resisted the urge to hug him again.

"I'm sorry for taking it in the first place."

"It's ok, I forgive you." Nick smiled. "If you do it again though I'm going to assume you've been manipulated."

George chuckled slightly at that.

"Dream and I have organised ear pieces for Doomsday. You'll get one so we can all communicate." He said.

"What the plan? What do I do?" Nick was eager.

"Blade will have multiple villains, and maybe manipulating countless people. We don't know exactly how many. Your job is to protect the people and fight those villains." George said.

"Ok. I can do that."

"Me and Dream will focus on Blade. If we stop him, we stop them all. But we need to prevent as many people possible from getting hurt."

"Why can't I help fight Blade?" Nick asked with furrowed eyebrows.

"I don't want you at the fight. Plus we need you everywhere else. I'm trusting that you'll do that, ok Nick? I need you to do that." George said.

Nick hesitated for a minute, but nodded.

"Ok. You can trust me, GNotFound." He said. George smiled.

"Thank you. *Sapnap*." He said, and that made Nick grin. "Where did that name even come from?"

"Oh, it's kinda dumb." Nick chuckled, a little embarrassed. "My friends call me Pandas sometimes, or they used to when we were younger. It backwards is Sadnap, but you said it was too sad." He said.

George's smile grew wider.

"So you flipped the d. I like it." He said.

"Thanks. It's kind of dumb though, but it means something to me." Nick shrugged.

"That's sweet." George felt like crying. "Well, I'll see you at Doomsday." He then said, taking a step back.

"At Doomsday." Nick repeated, doing a small salute to the blue hero, who chuckled before saluting back.

Nick watched the hero start to leave.

"Wait. Are you..."

GNotFound turned back around, and Nick faltered for a moment.

"Am I what?"

"Are you George?" Nick asked, staring into the goggles, trying to imagine his best friend behind them. Did it make sense? It didn't. It couldn't. Because George was the one being protected by the heroes. George knows GNotFound's identity and he's been in danger for so long.

"No." GNotFound said, turning back around. "No, I'm not George. George would hate to be a superhero."

"Oh. Yeah." Nick blinked. He tried to imagine it. George, who was already suffering from insomnia, being targeted by villains, stressed out of his mind about school and college, who already doesn't see his friends enough, and is too preoccupied with fixing his mental health. "George couldn't be a hero. I think he would fall apart." Nick added with a soft chuckle.

GNotFound didn't respond for a moment, still facing away.

"I think so too."

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"It's the weekend." Lexi said, jumping down the stairs with her arm linked with Drista. "Oh. Where's Mom and Dad?" She looked at George, who was sitting on the kitchen counter, head resting on his arms.

"Hm?" He lifted his heavy head, looking at his sister who's eyes widened.

"You look awful." Lexi said.

"Thanks." George huffed.

"No, seriously. Did you sleep?" She let go of Drista and walked over, poking under his eyes at the dark grey eye bags that he usually wore.

"What do you think?" George pushed her away.

"Don't you have your pills?"

"Don't want them." George muttered, glancing at his phone, turning it on briefly.

No alert.

He turned it off.

"You're stressed about Doomsday." Drista chimed in, and he spun his head to look at her.

"What? No." He quickly said.

"You are. Everyone is. You don't have to check every two seconds for an alert." She said, pointing at his phone. Lexi walked past George to grab some bowls and cereal out.

"Blade said he wanted the jewels today. So Doomsday could be any day from now. That's the worst part, we don't know when it is." He said.

"Exactly. So there's no point stressing about it." Drista said, walking over to help Lexi with breakfast.

"You never answered my question, where's Mom and Dad?" Lexi asked George as she poured in the milk.

"I'm here." Lorna said, entering the kitchen and walking to George to give him a kiss on the forehead in greeting. "George, what time did you come in last night? Clay got home after school and said you were doing something with Nick...?" She said, before walking over to the girls and giving them both a hug and kiss on the forehead as well. Drista beamed at the hug.

"Oh." George froze. He completely forgot that Clay was even living with him. At least now that the boy knew he was GNotFound, he could cover for him. After the meeting yesterday, he went to return Sapnap's jewel, but then he didn't want to go home. He knew he wasn't going to be able to sleep. So he just patrolled the city. As a good hero should. "Yeah. Um. Just... helping Nick plan a date."

"Nick got a date?" Lexi laughed.

"Don't bully him." Lorna lightly poked her in the shoulder. "Well you're a great friend George. Do you know when the date will be?"

"Um." George realised he didn't even know if Nick was planning a date. Or how things were going with him and Karl. He's spoken more to him as GNotFound than George recently. He hadn't even told Nick what happened at prom. He winced at that. "Hasn't decided when. Or what. I just... gave him some ideas."

"Good morning everyone." Mark walked in, ruffling George's hair.

"Honey, don't you have to get to work?" Lorna said.

"Yeah, I'm leaving now, just came to grab this." He leaned forward to grab an apple from the bowl.

"Why are you working on a Saturday?" Lexi asked.

"Oh! It's for the heroes address isn't it?" Drista said.

George, who had been zoning out for the most part, was now paying attention. He swivelled in his chair to look at his father.

"Yeah. Sam Warden said that Dream and GNotFound are coming in around 9ish I believe. Gotta set up everything." He checked his watch. "Yep, I should definitely head off. Why are you

teenagers all up at 8am on a Saturday anyways?"

George swallowed, drumming his fingers along the counter. He felt nerves begin to creep in.

"Well we wanted to be up to watch the news, and see the heroes speak." Drista said.

"And why are you awake, George? You look exhausted." Mark said.

"I was with Nick, it went later than we thought and yeah... I wanted to see the hero thing." He said with a shrug.

"Oo! Dad, can we come with you to work! We can see the heroes talk!" Lexi said.

George's stomach dropped.

"No, Lex. That's not very professional. I can't just bring four teenagers to work because there are celebrities." Mark chuckled.

"They aren't *celebrities*." George scoffed.

"Well they are quite famous. Yeah, not like traditional celebrities but I'd say they are a new genre." Mark said.

"Please can we come, Dad! We'll be good, I promise." Lexi said.

"Lexi, listen to your father. He said no." Lorna said.

"We will sit in the corner and be quiet." Drista suggested with a sweet smile.

"I can't take all of you." Mark said.

"I'm not going." George said immediately.

"Just us then!" Lexi said, pointing at herself and Drista.

"Would Clay want to?" Lorna said.

"Would I want to what?" Clay finally walked into the kitchen, yawning and rubbing his eyes. His morning hair was a mess. He gave everyone a smile, but when he saw George, his face lit up and he walked over to sit beside him.

"Would you want to go into my Dad's work to watch the heroes address?" Lexi said eagerly.

"Woah, I haven't even said yes-" Mark tried to say.

"No, I'm alright. But thanks for the offer." He said, looking at George with a small smile. George's leg was bouncing, and Clay reached out to stop it.

"Ok. Well if it's just you two girls, fine." Mark sighed.

They both cheered.

George closed his eyes.

"What about you Mom?" Lexi asked Lorna.

"Oh, no. I've got work too. Got a teacher's meeting today at the school, and probably going to

watch the news there." She said, and checked her phone. "Which I should also be leaving for now."

"Why are you guys all still going to work and everything. What if we just like, evacuate for a few weeks, or until whenever Doomsday happens." George suggested.

"We don't know when that is. And we can't just give up our jobs for that long. And where would we go?" Lorna said. George looked between his parents.

"But we could die. People could die." He said.

"The heroes will protect us if we need it." Mark said.

"How can you have that much faith in them! They are just teenagers." George said.

He felt a squeeze on his knee and looked at Clay who was looking at him with furrowed eyebrows.

"They haven't failed us yet. They weren't here last Doomsday. This time will be different." Clay said.

"You don't know that." George responded.

"I have all my trust in them. Whoever those young men are, they are truly incredible people. So much responsibility on their shoulders at such a young age, but I trust they won't let us down." Mark said. George looked at him, wanting to cry.

"If Dream and GNotFound and Sapnap have no choice but to stay in this city and fight the evil and put their lives at risk, then I don't feel like it's fair for us to leave. They are sacrificing so much for us, we can't leave them to look after an empty city." Lorna said.

George felt his eyes begin to water, so he turned to face Clay so his family wouldn't see. Clay just sent him a small smile, rubbing his thumb on his knee.

"We'll be ok." He said softly.

"Well, we have to get going. We shall see you both later." Mark said, patting George and Clay on the shoulder. But George stood up to hug him instead, slightly taking his father by surprise, but he welcomed the embrace.

"What's this for?" Mark asked.

"Just in case." George whispered.

They pulled apart and George went to hug his Mom as well, who had just grabbed her car keys. She kissed him on the cheek as well.

"No need for all this *just in case*. We will see you tonight, Georgie." She said.

"You can't guarantee that." He said, pulling away.

He turned to look at his sister. Her eyes went wide.

"No. Nope. I'm not hugging you." She said.

"Good. I didn't want to hug you anyway." He scoffed.

She stuck her tongue out at him, and he did it right back.



"Well. Drista isn't so lucky." Clay stood up and started walking towards his sister with open arms. She shrieked, but he cornered her and hugged her. She gave in to the hug surprisingly quick.

"Clay." She groaned. "You're such a loser."

"I know." He said.

"Get off now." She said.

"No." He laughed.

Drista pulled a fork out from behind her back, and held it up. Clay immediately let go, stepping back with his hands up.

"Woah. Woah. Ok. I stopped." He said.

"Imma fork you up." She said, and started running at him. Clay screamed and sprinted out of the room.

"Right. Well, on that note, we really do have to go." Mark said.

"We will see you when we get back, George. Just relax at home with Clay." Lorna said.

"Bye. Love you." He called, as his parents left the room

He turned to look at Lexi, who was already looking at him.

She quickly closed the gap and hugged him, but let go before he could even react.

"Bye, idiot." She said, grabbing her phone and walking away.

"Love you too, Lexi." He chuckled.

George sighed and cleaned up the girl's bowls of cereal before sitting back down at the counter, chin resting on his palm.

He would have to go to the news soon. Where his father, his sister and Clay's sister would be watching him, along with the entire city.

"Hey." A soft hand on his back. Clay sat down beside him, still with his warm hand rubbing his back. "You alright?"

"Yeah."

"They are gone now. You can be honest." Clay said. George shrugged.

"Just worried."

"I know. Me too. But it will be ok."

"You don't know that. I could fuck up so badly. Promise me that whenever Doomsday happens, you will hide. And you will take my family and your sister and hide." He said.

"I'll protect them with my life." Clay said honestly.

"I don't know what I'd do if any of you got hurt. But I can't just protect you guys, I have to fight." George said.

"I know." Clay grabbed one of his hands with his free one. "And you'll do great."

"I'll fuck it up."

"You won't. You're incredible, George. You're the best person to be a hero."

"That's not true. *You* should be a hero. You'd be perfect. You're calm and collected and you'd keep my head on straight." George said with a small laugh, covering his face with a hand. "God. I should just give you my Sapphire."

"I'm flattered." Clay laughed. "But I think I'd be rather impulsive... don't you think?"

George thought about it.

"I mean... sometimes you say things without thinking." He said, and Clay rolled his eyes with a smile.

"Ok. Yeah. Exactly." He said.

"But I still think you'd make a great hero." George said seriously. "You have the right heart and head for it. You've got so much love to share. That's all you need to be a superhero."

Clay couldn't help the pink that filled his cheeks.

"Thank you." He whispered, the weight of his ring feeling heavier.

"I'm sorry I didn't come home last night. I was... I had the meeting with Dream and our..." George still knew what to refer to Phil as. "Yeah. Um. Then I had to go talk to Sapnap." George said, which was the truth.

"That's alright. I assumed you were with Dream or something." Clay said quickly with an awkward laugh.

"Yeah. That must be weird for you. Knowing I'm friends with him. And Sapnap I guess." George said.

"Well, I... already knew that you sort of knew Dream, right? Like that's why you were being targeted by villains. I guess it makes more sense that you are friends, now that I know you're a hero and everything." He said it all rather awkwardly, trying to think about what Clay would say if he wasn't Dream. But George didn't take notice.

"Well, we are friends but he doesn't know I'm GNotFound. It's... it's weird." He said.

"How do you think he'll react if he knew you were GNotFound?" Clay asked, a small smile tugging at his lips.

"I don't know. He might be really confused. I can picture like... him being betrayed I didn't tell him. Because... this is dumb." George shook his head.

"Betrayed?" Clay asked, extremely confused.

"I've known him as G for longer, right. And then we randomly became friends when I'm George. But didn't tell him. I know I couldn't, but I feel like he'd be upset that the entire time it was *me*. Because Dream... well." He cringed slightly. "He sort of... likes me? Well, he likes GNotFound."

"Right." Clay said, voice breaking slightly. He cleared his throat.

"I don't know how he even likes me as GNotFound. He doesn't even know who I am. And he knows me as George but he clearly... like... well, clearly he doesn't like George, so he prefers the superhero version of me, the one with powers and is cool and mysterious. And not me." He sighed.

George looked at Clay.

"Not that I *want* him to like me as George! But... it does hurt a little bit. Just the fact that he likes me as a hero and not me." He said quickly. Because he doesn't want Dream to like him. Because he doesn't like Dream.

Right?

"But the hero version of you is still you. Just with your face covered." Clay said softly.

"GNotFound is cooler. He has a bow, fights villains, is mysterious and faceless. George is a mentally ill high school student who bothers him with all his trivial issues." George smiled painfully. "It makes sense."

"I think he would ecstatic to know who you are." he squeezed George's hand. "He will think you being GNotFound is the most perfect possibility. He will probably hate himself for not connecting you soon." Clay said, words all too true.

"But then he will only like George because he likes G."

"What if he likes George as well? What if he fell for you and GNotFound?" Clay asked softly. "Before he ever finds out."

"Dream does not like me." George shook his head.

"Maybe he does. Maybe he's liked you for longer than you know." Clay stared at him. "Longer than *he* knew."

"Longer than he knew?" George asked, confused.

"Sometimes it's hard to know what exactly you feel for someone. Especially if you like someone else already." Clay said slowly. George realised what he meant. Clay was referring to how he has a crush on two people, one of which is George. "Like... like with you... I think I've liked you for much longer than I realised but I didn't realise because I thought I liked someone else."

"Right." George's voice croaked.

"I'm just saying, that just because Dream is in love with GNotFound, doesn't mean that your hero self is better. I think it just means that he fell for G first. Because he knew G first." Clay said. "You're amazing. And he's an idiot if he doesn't agree with me."

George pulled Clay in for a hug suddenly, taking the boy by surprise.

"Thank you, Clay." He whispered. Clay rubbed his hand up and down his back.

"I'm just being honest." Clay responded.

Clay tried to pull back, but George didn't let go, and it made Clay chuckle lightly.

"What's this for?" He asked, still holding George.

"Just in case." George mumbled. Clay let his chin fall against George's shoulder, and he breathed

in deeply.

"But there's no need to say *just in case*. Because Doomsday will be fine." Clay said.

"No one can promise that." George said, finally pulling away.

"I can. Because *you're* one of the superheroes." Clay said, and George rolled his eyes.

"Shut up." He muttered, a light blush on his cheeks.

"I'm serious. You're amazing as George and as GNotFound. You're incredible with a mask or no mask, a bow or no bow."

"Really?" George said, sounding unsure.

"You were a superhero in my eyes before I knew who you were." Clay said, hands rising to George's shoulders to hold their eye contact.

"You don't need superpowers to be Super, George."

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"You both ready?"

George nodded, glancing to his right at Dream, who nodded as well.

Mark smiled at the two superheroes, just behind camera. George was avoiding looking at his father the whole time. He knew his sister and Drista were also in the corner of the room, moved out of the way by Mark. But he could feel their eyes on his as well, excitement bubbling from their distant voices.

They were going to broadcast live to the city. GNotFound and Dream addressing everyone at once. Terrifying. George thought he was going to shit himself.

"Fuck." George muttered to himself, but then he felt a tight grip on his hand. He looked down to see the green material of his partner beside him, and looked up to see Dream giving him a comforting smile. He smiled back, and Dream rubbed his hand with his thumb.

"We got this." Dream whispered.

"Alright. Going live in 3..."

George took a deep breath. He'd practiced last night. This would be fine.

"2... 1..." Mark pointed, and a light on the camera went red. The room somehow grew smaller when he felt the thousands of hypothetical eyes staring at him.

"Hello people." Dream started in a dramatic voice before George could even get any words out. He shoved him lightly and shook his head.

"Hi. Um, we don't really do this often, speaking to this many people so you'll have to excuse us for any slip ups. Public speaking was not in our job description." George said with a light laugh.

"But we will try our best, because we know this is important and I imagine everyone is probably a bit scared and unsure of what's happening in the city." Dream continued, and George felt himself relax at how natural it was. Dream was good at speaking, and his presence made George calm down.

"As I'm sure everyone is aware, Blade made a live appearance yesterday saying that he was going to create Doomsday II if we do not give up our jewels. First of all, a few weeks ago Blade made a physical appearance at the attack at Pandora High. While this was his first public appearance, myself and Dream did in fact know of his involvement with the villains. We didn't feel the need to tell everyone because he hadn't yet made a show." George said, explaining themselves for the small controversy a while back

"That fight left everyone with many unanswered questions, some stuff we don't know yet either." Dream added.

"What we do know is that Blade *will* attack. He will go through on his word because he doesn't bluff. And while some people may disagree with our decision..." George glanced to his side at Dream who gave him a squeeze of the hand. "We are not giving up our jewels."

"We've defended this city for a year, and we aren't giving up now. Blade is going to extreme lengths to get our jewels and the very fact he is willing to hurt innocent people just proves whatever these are for, is not for good. He is desperate and doesn't care for anyone. Us giving up would be worse than Doomsday." Dream said, and George nodded.

"But, of course, this does mean that Blade will attack. We cannot make any choices for you, but Dream and I promise to do anything for this city. We will defend the people with our lives, as we always have. Whatever Blade throws at us... me, Dream, and Sapnap too, we will be there to protect you." George said.

"We don't know when Blade will attack. We don't *entirely* know what he will do... but we can guess it will be similar to the first Doomsday. So we encourage you all to be ready, listen out for alerts on your phones, do not come into contact with Blade, and create a safe space for you to hide. The best option would be for you to evacuate the city. But we don't know how long until the attack is, so we can't encourage leaving your homes and jobs. We have no timeframe." Dream said.

"There's only three of us. So we need you all to protect each other as well. Look out for each other, help each other, protect each other."

George smiled to himself.

"You don't need superpowers to be super." He said, mind going to Clay. "You don't need to be a superhero to do the right thing."

He felt Dream's hand squeeze his slightly.

"It's been a long year. So many alerts that I know must be of an inconvenience for you. But we appreciate all the support and understanding. Even when it felt like Blade had us cornered, or our own private lives were suffocating us, or the Mayor..." Dream drifted off. He didn't finish his sentence.

"Or when the Mayor didn't support us." George finished. "You all did. And we never forgot that. So thank you all, for everything you've done. We will do everything we can to protect our city. Because this is our home too." George squeezed Dream's hand back. "And we aren't giving up."

"So fuck you, Blade!" Dream yelled, and George immediately clamped a hand over his mouth.

"Even though I would have used less aggressive words while on *live TV*." George gave Dream a side glare. "I think we can *all* agree on that sentiment."

George glanced over at Mark behind the camera, who gave him a thumbs up. He lowered his hand

from Dream's mouth.

The camera light turned off, and George instantly relaxed in his seat. The room started applauding, and he felt more overwhelmed by the praise.

"You did great, G." Dream said, patting his shoulder. George turned to smile at his partner.

"You did too. Apart from the swear." He said.

"Well, I think it was justified." Dream shrugged.

"You guys did amazing." Mark interrupted. George turned to him, and stiffened. "Really. For two untrained young men, you both did really well. Apart from... the swear but we've bleeped it during the slight delay to live air so you're good."

"Thank you, Ma- Mr Davidson..."

"Call me Mark." He stuck his hand out, and Dream shook it with a smile. He then offered the hand to George, who just stared at it for a moment before shaking it. "You boys earned it for saving me and my family. Countless times, I might add. My wife, Lorna, and my kids Lexi and George."

"It was no problem, sir. We appreciate your help and everyone coming in on the weekend." Dream said, once George let go and looked away.

"Of course, it was an honour, really. I brought my daughter and my friend to watch because they were really keen. Everyone loves the two of you." He gestured to the corner where the two girls were watching.

"We can go say hi, if you'd like." Dream offered, a small smile.

George turned to his partner with wide eyes. He did not want to talk to his sister. And he wanted to voice that to Dream, but obviously he couldn't know.

"Oh, no, it's alright. I don't want to interrupt your day." Mark said.

"It's fine. Right G?" He asked George, who just nodded and didn't say a word. Mark grinned, and turned to beckon the two girls over. They immediately ran over, with smiles of excitement.

"Hi GNotFound!" Drista said, running forward and hugging him. He was surprised.

"Hi, again Drista. How, um... how are things with your father." He felt like he had to ask even though he already knew. He's met the girl multiple times as his hero self, even saved her.

"Well, Clay got kicked out so I followed him and we are living with the Davidson's." She said, stepping back and then looking at Dream. "I'm not sure if we've properly met." She said to him with a smile.

"Uh. Yeah. Hello." He was awkward now. "It's nice to meet you."

"I've met you both before." Lexi said smugly.

"You were unconscious when they saved us, Lexi." Mark said with a slight chuckle, hand on her shoulder.

"No, at the supermarket attack when Mom's memory was erased. I spoke to them both." She said.

"That's true. It's good to see you again. Not bleeding on the floor." Dream said. She grinned.

George really couldn't deal with this.

"I think you guys should all evacuate. Your family has been targeted before, I don't see why it won't happen again. I'll even find you accommodation somewhere else myself if you leave the city until Doomsday is over." George finally spoke. They all looked at him.

"That's not necessary, GNotFound, but I appreciate the offer. We want to stay. You two aren't abandoning the city. It's not fair for us to either." Mark said.

"But we have superpowers. You guys can get hurt."

"You aren't invincible. You can get hurt too. If you're sacrificing your lives and safety for the city, then the least we can do is be here to cheer you on." Mark said.

George didn't understand the logic. Maybe it was his hero lens, but he couldn't fathom why they wouldn't just leave the city.

"Thank you, Mark." Dream said, then looked at George, who must look like he wanted to leave.

"We better go, now but it was lovely seeing you guys again." He glanced at Drista. "And meeting you, officially."

"Oh, before you leave, Sam Warden is in a conference room to talk to you both." Mark said, pointing down the hall.

"Thank you." George said, the words painful to get out.

They waved the small group goodbye before George quickly led Dream down the hall.

"Why were you so awkward?" Dream asked with a small smirk.

"Awkward? I mean... it's just weird meeting people." George said nervously.

"I think they are an amazing family." Dream said. George pursed his lips.

"Is that just because they are George's family." George muttered.

"They are great people with and without George."

"Drista is great too. Her and her brother Clay are great kids, it's a pity they have an awful father." George said. Dream didn't respond to that.

They finally reached a room that had windows facing the hallway, and George could see Sam and Callahan, and one other person in the room. Sam gave him a wave and he smiled and walked in with Dream in tow.

"That was perfect, guys. You did amazing on TV. You're naturals." Sam said, hitting George on the shoulder.

"Thanks. It was terrifying." George said, and that made Sam laugh.

"Well, anyway. we've got these earpieces for you." He gestured to the other man in the room. He had a buzz cut, and a bag. He put the bag on the table to pull something out, but George was focused on his face.

"Have... have I seen you before?" George asked. The man looked up at him, slightly wide eyes.

"This is Jack. Jack Manifold. He's part of my tech team." Sam said. George stared at the man. His face rang a distant bell but he had no idea where from.

"You've probably seen me on TV behind Sam." Jack said slowly. "It's nice to meet you both by the way. You do good work for the city." He said, pulling out three earpieces.

George looked at Dream, who was watching him. He just shook his head and shrugged. Maybe he *had* just seen Jack on TV.

Callahan took the pieces from Jack and handed one each to the heroes.

"So they basically fit snugly in and around your ear. There are three settings. Once is push to talk, you just hold down the button and the others can hear you. Or you can flick the switch above the button and you can talk freely without holding it down. Or you can switch the ear piece off altogether at the back." Jack explained, as Callahan held the third one, pointing at the various switches.

George turned it around in his hand.

"How do we know who is listening? Do you have access to what we are saying? Can anyone tap into it?" George asked, watching Dream put his in his ear.

"These were made specially for you guys to communicate with each other. We do not have access, or our own piece. And they operate on a radio frequency no one can access. Quite high tech stuff. Jack and Callahan worked on them for a while." Sam said.

George hummed, looking at the small device.

"No trackers?"

"G, chill." Dream chuckled.

"I can see your concerns, GNotFound. You have the right to be suspicious. But we genuinely just want to help. It's the least we can do after everything you've done for this city." Sam said.

George put the device into his ear. It wrapped around his lobe and pressed into the hole. It fit well, and he was thankful his goggles didn't get in the way.

"This one is for Sapnap." Sam pointed at the one Callahan was using. Callahan held it out for Dream, who took it but then handed it to George.

"Makes more sense that you give it to him." Dream said. George took it with a grimace. He knew Sapnap's identity.

He never stopped to think about how Dream felt about that. Dream was upset when he found out George knew his identity. Did it hurt when he found out he knew Sapnap's?

George stared at Dream for a little longer. He didn't seem upset. Was he?

"Thank you, Sam." George said. The man smiled and shook his hand again.

"Anytime, GNotFound. Dream." He shook Dream's as well. "If there is anything else we can do, let me know."



"We appreciate it. And thank you Callahan and Jack." Dream said, acknowledging the other two men.

George couldn't help but look at Jack's face again. He had seen him somewhere.

"Stay safe." Dream said, walking away.

"You too." Sam called.

George didn't move.

"G, come on." He felt Dream touch his arm.

"I really feel like I've seen you somewhere." George said again, staring at Jack. The man looked between him and Sam.

"TV."

George thought about it, replayed his face in his head over and over.

Then it clicked.

He snapped his bow and held up an arrow, pointing at Jack's face. The room yelled, and Jack put his hands in the air.

"You." George stared at him. "You were the van driver."

"What?" Jack said, taking a step backwards.

"G, what are you talking about?" Dream asked, beside him.

"You stole the safe. With the Awesomedude villain. You took it from the Mayor." George took a step closer, moving around the table.

"GNotFound, please stop." Sam moved next to Jack.

"He's a thief. Are you aware you've hired a thief?" George asked Sam with gritted teeth.

"What safe?" Jack said, voice high pitched.

"The Mayor's safe. The one with the documents of his stealing and blackmailing. The one that conveniently." George looked at Sam. "Fell into the opposing candidates hands."

"GNotFound, listen." Sam began to talk.

"No. You've been lying to us." George said, hand grabbing the earpiece still in his ear. "I don't even want this anymore."

Sam's eyes widened, and he took a step forward.

"GNotFound, I understand your reasoning but I promise those are clean. You can open it up yourself, there's no tracker. You can search our phones and houses, we have no way to hear what you are saying. All we've wanted to do was help you and help the city. Yes, the safe was stolen. But it was for a good cause. Without evidence, the Mayor will stay in power. We did what we had to do. I'm sure you understand." Sam reasoned.

"So you are working with Awesomedude. He told me he doesn't work for anyone." George said, arrow flicking between Sam and Jack.

"He doesn't. He doesn't work *for* anyone. He just did us a favour." Jack said, glancing at Sam.

"You haven't been transparent at all in your campaign. You said Callahan taps into the Mayor's messages. So why should I believe you won't do the same with these. Why should I believe anything you say. Why should I believe these are safe." George put the ear piece on the table, and returned his hand to the bow to summon his arrow.

"G, the only thing they've done was steal the safe. But honestly, that's kind of a good thing. We want the Mayor gone, right." Dream said quietly.

"They lied about it. And they stole." George said.

"We've lied about shit too. We lie for a good cause. So do they." Dream said. George gritted his teeth.

He didn't have the time or energy for this fight. He had more pressing issues.

"Fine. But I want no more lies." George still didn't lower the bow.

"None." Sam nodded.

"And I want your help in sending Mayor Block to prison."

"Done." Sam smiled.

"But I need your help in protecting his kids. They will live with the Davidson family from now. Whether the Mayor asks for them or not, they will stay with the Davidsons. That mansion isn't safe." George said.

"G." Dream's eyes were wide.

"Alright." Sam's smile grew.

"And they will permanently live with them after Block is in prison. There will be no issues." George said.

"You have my word."

"G, you can't just do that. You can't speak for that entire family." Dream said, distressed.

"They are fine with it. They want Clay and Drista with them." George said, mostly to Dream who looked stressed at what was happening.

"How do you know that?" Sam asked.

"I know." George lowered his bow.

George could have asked a lot of things from the powerful man in return for forgiving his lies. But his first thought was of Clay and his sister.

Clay had never felt more love in his veins than in that moment.

•

George sat on the roof of his house that night, staring at the street rather than the stars. He was waiting. Because it had been much too long, and he was hoping Dream knew that too.

He wanted to see Dream.

But he wanted to see him as George.

"Hey Georgie." A soft voice came from behind him, and George immediately stood up, nearly slipping on the roof as he ran into Dream's arms, hugging him. The hero hugged him back instantly, and they stayed like that for a few moments.

"I've missed you."

"We saw each other not *that* long ago. Only a week or two." Dream said, resting his chin on George's head as he swayed slightly.

"But you haven't been here forever. I just..." George sighed deeply, tightening his arms around Dream. "I just want to talk to you. I don't want to be crying in a park this time."

"Ok." Dream thread a hand through George's hair. "We can just talk."

They finally parted and both sat down on the roof. George instantly leaned into Dream, who put an arm around him. George could feel his stress slowly flickering away the longer he sat with the hero.

Clay looked down at the boy under his arms and felt his heart melt. George still wanted to be near him, still liked his presence. Even though he wasn't Clay, maybe he hasn't completely ruined his friendship with George, even if it was only as his hero self. Things were weird and tense between Clay and George. But Dream and George was simple. It had always been simple.

They stared at the stars for several minutes, in silence, holding each other. Words didn't need to be shared yet, they both knew this would be one of the few moments of peace before war.

Clay realised then how many times he had stared at the stars with George. And with G. He's had moments like these with the boy he loves more than he knew, and he resented himself for never realising.

"Thanks for being with me." George finally said, words soft in the quiet night, almost disappearing with the darkness.

"Of course." Dream whispered, running his thumb up and down George's arm. "You know I love seeing you."

"I don't know why you do. But I appreciate it more than you know. It's nice to be able to see you... like this. Like not switched on to fight or holding a sword. Just you." George said, looking up to look at Dream's eyes through the holes in the mask. Green eyes reflected back, and George decided they had the same warmth and colour as the faint streetlights.

"I like seeing you like this as well." Dream responded, his spare hand coming up to gently press a thumb against one of George's eye bags. "So open. With your emotions. I feel like you are the sort of person who doesn't share their feelings often." He said softly.

George shrugged slightly.

"I guess I just feel like myself with you. Which makes no sense because you barely have a face and I don't know your name." George said. Dream chuckled.

"Maybe I could tell you." Dream whispered.

George's eyes widened, and he didn't respond.

"Is that something you would want?" Dream pressed in a gentle tone, watching George's eyes carefully.

"I..." He hesitated, and Dream saw hope. "I do. I do want to. But you know I can't. If the Blade..." Dream nodded to silence him.

"I know." He sighed.

"I can't expose both you and GNotFound." George said.

"But you want to? You want to know me?" Dream asked, light smile returning. George pursed his lips as he thought.

"You're one of the most important people in my life." His smile copied Dream's, if not a little nervous. "How could I not?" He whispered.

Dream embraced George, knocking them both onto the roof, with a sound of surprise coming from the brunet. The hero buried his face against George's shoulder, clutching him tightly.

"You don't know how much that means to me." Clay whispered, welcoming the stinging in his eyes.

Because GNotFound wants to know him. George does. Someone wants to know him. And they were so close. So close to the end. So close to relief.

George laughed lightly, hands moving to Dream's shoulders.

"Get off, you're heavy." He groaned. Dream refused, shaking his head and holding George tighter.

"Dream!" George said, pushing his head up, so Dream could look at him.

They made eye contact, and Dream gave him a goofy smile. George smiled back, rolling his eyes slightly, but there was a faint dusting of pink over his freckles.

"Is that a blush I see, Georgie?" Dream said, finger coming up to poke his cheek. George's smile fell and he tried to push Dream off, but only succeeded in the weight being removed. Dream was still hovering above him, mask near his face.

"Get away, you idiot." George huffed, squirming under Dream's intense eye contact. It made him nervous. It felt like he was being scrutinised.

"But I like being this close to you." Dream said, hand coming up to touch George's cheek again, brushing across towards his jawline.

George didn't say a word as Dream traced him. This felt awfully familiar, as Dream took in his features. He didn't move as Dream's fiery touch traced his face.

"What are you doing?" George whispered.

Dream just looked at him, hand finally moving away from his face. "Just looking." He smiled.

"Not much to see." George scoffed. "Just my face. You know what I look like."

"Mm." Dream just hummed, but didn't shift his eyes. He bent down and pressed a kiss to George's cheek, his lips lingering for a moment before pulling away. His mask had pressed into George's face when he did, but it certainly not the cause for the dark red shade to fall across his face.

"Wh-what was that for?" George stammered.

"Just in case." Dream whispered back.

George stared at him, and then pulled him flush against him for an embrace, squeezing the air out of Dream, who laughed lightly into his shoulder.

"What's this for?" Dream asked softly.

George squeezed tighter.

"Just in case." He whispered.

When Dream pulled away, they stared at each other for a few moments. George needed to change the topic. He needed Dream to move. This was too close, too real.

"Will you come see me after Doomsday? Whenever it is?" George asked. And those words were finally the cue to make Dream move away, and George sat up once more.

"Yes. Of course." Dream responded.

"Ok. Good." George said, looking at his shoes, blush still slightly on his face.

Dream smiled.

"Aw. You want to see me, Georgie." Dream teased and George scoffed.

"I just want to make sure you aren't dead." George responded. Dream poked his cheek.

"You care about me." He chuckled.

"Well." George shrugged, meeting Dream's eyes. "Yeah." He said seriously.

Dream's goofy grin fell into a sweet smile and he hugged George again.

"You mean the world to me too, George." He whispered into his hair.

"I didn't say you mean the *world* to me." George tried to joke.

"No." Dream pulled away, hands coming up to brush George's light pink cheeks, green eyes meeting brown, one secret meeting another.

"You didn't have to." He whispered.

## Chapter End Notes

What's this?

A chapter with clayxgeorge, georgexdream and gnotfoundxdream all in one? Gosh, I spoil you guys

What can I say? The calm before the storm bb

ALSO dreamfanart on twitter liked a fanart of Super! It was drawn by @chiyahowo on Twitter! Go shoot them a like and follow because she is incredible. You can see it and also other artwork people have drawn for this story on my twitter as well, which is @LottiaraT. I post updates there as well :))) So chuck me a follow while you're at it and I might just post a sneak peak at 500 followers

Love y'all <3

# And so it begins

## Chapter Summary

Doomsday begins. George is at school, his family is all over the city, Sapnap already used his power and Dream is, well... Dream.

## Chapter Notes

TW// amputation, blood (described in detail), throwing up

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **THREE AND A HALF YEARS AGO**

(just about)

"I hate high school." George said, throwing his book on the floor of Nick's room. The other boy swivelled around in his chair to look at him.

"Why?"

"There's too much homework! Miss Nesbit gave me an entire worksheet to do. She gave me one yesterday as well! I swear, her favourite thing is just giving students homework." He said, lying down on the floor of the room.

"Well, then just don't do the homework." Nick said with a smile.

"I want to actually pass. God, it's so much harder than middle school. Eighth grade was so easy." George sighed.

"Well, if it makes you feel any better. Sophomore is harder next year apparently." Nick said with a shrug.

George turned to look at his friend, his expression unamused.

"How does that make me feel any better?"

"Dunno."

George just groaned, and rolled over onto his stomach, checking his phone. He saw a notification and rolled his eyes at the message.

"That guy, Alex, I think his name is? He texted me for help on the math worksheet. Like I know how to do it." George scoffed.

"Oh, Alex who sat with us one time last week? I like him. I think I heard some people calling him Quackity." Nick said.

"What kind of a name is that?"

"An epic one."

"Well. Whatever. I can't help him." George typed out a response. "I said he should ask Darryl. That guy is a math genius."

There was talking heard outside, and Nick immediately got up and dashed to his window, opening the blinds just wide enough to look out.

"What are you doing?" George asked with raised eyebrows.

"There's a new family moving in next door today. They have a kid who looks like he could be our age." Nick said, spying on the neighbours.

"Is he cute?" George sat up.

"You're such an idiot." Nick laughed. George ignored him, and stood up and ran to his side, also peering out of the window.

There was a moving van next door, with some people helping move furniture inside. Standing on the sidewalk was a young boy with brown hair and a kind smile who was talking to who George assumed was his mother.

"Oh, he is kind of cute." George said with a raised eyebrow. "Not my type though."

"Well, what- what is your type then?" Nick asked, looking back out of the window. George stepped back with a shrug, sitting on the chair Nick was previously in.

"Tall."

"Well that's easy considering you're the shortest boy in the grade." Nick laughed.

"Shut up! You're only a few inches taller! I'll catch up by senior year. You watch. I'll be taller than you." He said.

"Sure, bud."

George rolled his eyes and hummed. A few more seconds passed.

"Blonde."

"Oh god, you're still going." Nick groaned.

"What? Come on. Tall and blonde. You can't tell me that's not instantly attractive."

"I actually just don't care." Nick said. George stuck his tongue out at him. "Maybe it's the straight in me." Nick shrugged.

"Just because you're as straight as they get, doesn't mean you can't admit when you see a hot guy." George teased.

"Whatever dude." Nick rolled his eyes, still looking out the window.



George leaned back in the seat, swinging around. He yawned and sighed.

"I only got 6 hours of sleep last night, you know." George yawned. Nick snorted.

"How are you surviving? You're the only 14 year old I know that actually takes afternoon *naps*. Like some old person."

"I like my sleep, ok? Don't mock me." George defended himself.

There was a loud crash from outside, and Nick gasped. George sat up in the chair.

"What was that?" George asked, seeing Nick staring out the window with wide eyes.

"Some guy just drove into a house with his truck!" He opened the blinds fully so George could see. The boy stood up and ran back over to the window.

The truck pulled out of the house, which now had a massive hole in the front of it.

Everyone who was previously helping the family next door move in, was now yelling at the crash, and some people were on the phone.

But the truck driver just backed up, and turned the truck towards the moving van. The man driving it was staring at the group.

He started driving towards the house, and George's eyes widened.

He pushed Nick to the side, and opened the window.

"Run!" George yelled, catching the attention of the family and the moving people. They all noticed the truck's new target, and scattered out of the way as it bulldozed past the moving van and straight into the door of the house.

Nick yelled in shock and George gasped.

"We need the police." George said, going pale.

An explosion echoed in the distance, and made both freshmen freeze, and turn to stare at each other. It echoed through multiple streets, the sounds of yells and panicked screaming following.

"What was that?" George whispered.

"I don't know." Nick said.

A piercing sound echoed around their own room, making them both jump. George dropped his phone which vibrated loudly in his hand, and Nick hit his arm against the window in surprise.

"What was that!" Nick yelled. George looked down at his phone on the phone, that was lit up.

He bent down and picked it up, staring at the message with his jaw open wide.

## **EMERGENCY ALERT FOR THE PUBLIC**

**Everyone is to lock down immediately due to several terrorist acts occurring simultaneously by an organised group. Do not leave your homes.**

"What the fuck!" Nick stared at his own phone, which had the same message. "How did we get the same thing?"

"It's a public emergency alert. They usually do it for natural disasters." George said slowly, still staring at the message.

His phone began to ring a second later, and he answered it.

"Mom! Are you ok? What's going on?" He asked.

"I'm ok. Where are you, George?" Lorna asked.

"I'm at Nick's. Some man drove into the house next door with his truck and there was an explosion a few streets away!" George began to panic.

The door to Nick's room opened and his father ran in.

"We are going to the basement, come on." He said.

"You stay right where you are with Nick and his family. Don't leave the house, ok honey?"

"Where are you? Where's Dad and Lexi?" He asked, as Nick grabbed his arm and tugged him out of the room following his Dad.

"Lexi is with me, we are ok. Your father..." She trailed off.

"What? Where's Dad?" George asked.

"He's... he's fine. He's at work."

"Ok." George felt himself tearing up as Nick pulled him down the stairs.

"We'll be ok. Just stay calm, alright? There's no use in panicking."

"I love you, Mom." He said.

"Love you too, Georgie."

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## **PRESENT TIME**

George rubbed the back of his neck. Something felt weird. The energy around him felt weird. And it's felt like that for the whole day. The hair on the back of his neck was sticking up. His hands felt jittery and he swear he could hear every sound.

It was like he something bad was going to happen.

"It's going to be today." George said. Clay and Nick both turned to look at him.

"You've said that every day since the hero announcement. It's been three days." Nick said, rolling his eyes.

"No. I'm serious. I feel it. Don't you? Like something bad is going to happen." George said, putting down his pencil onto the table, hands unnecessarily shaky.

Clay grabbed his hand and smiled gently when he met his eyes.

"You've been on edge for days. It's alright." He said.

"Can you blame me?" George said. Clay traced George's knuckles with his fingers absentmindedly.

"I just think you can't predict it, and there's nothing you can do at the moment, so just chill." Clay said.

"It's *going* to be today." George pulled his hand away from Clay and pushed his chair back from the table. He wanted to leave and transform. He's transformed a dozen times over the weekend, whenever he feels this anxious.

"What? You got spider senses or some shit?" Nick scoffed, doodling on his paper, not paying much attention to George.

"No. But my gut is telling me it's today."

"George, you don't know that." Clay said gently.

"I know you're worried the villains are going to come for you and your family first because of your weird connections to the heroes." Nick's eyes darted towards Clay briefly before going back to George. "But there's not much you can really do. It'll be ok. Dream and Sapnap and GNotFound will protect you."

George flexed his fingers.

"I don't want them to protect me. I want them to protect the city." He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Something feels off."

"What do you mean?"

"It just feels weird." He looked around. Everyone was doing their class work quietly. Mr Peterson was at the front of the class, reading on his computer. Some students weren't doing the work obviously, just on their phones or talking to friends or silently messing around.

"Seems like a normal Monday biology class to me." Nick muttered. Wilbur sneezed from across the room. "Oh god, fuck. You're right George. Holy fucking shit, that *sneeze*. Oh it's the end of the world." Nick fake fainted, the back of his hand against his own forehead as he collapsed onto George's lap.

"Fuck off." George pushed him off, and Nick sat back up. "I'm not talking about a sneeze. It just... it just feels weird."

"I dunno. Wilbur's sneeze was out of the blue. And look, he's on the phone." Nick nodded in the distance at the brunet. "You're right George, this day is very strange." Nick said sarcastically.

George looked over at Wilbur, and saw he looked confused, with furrowed eyebrows. He didn't speak at the phone, but he removed it from his ear and looked down at it with a blink.

"You're making fun of me." George said to Nick, eyes back on his friend.

"That's my job."

"I'm..." George ran a hand through his hair. "I still feel off. On edge." Clay grabbed his shaky hands again.

"Maybe you should see Puffy. Panic attack?" He said. George swallowed, but shrugged.

"I've felt like this for days though." He whispered.

"George, Nick." A whisper appeared by their table. Wilbur was crouching down beside Clay's desk. Mr Peterson hadn't noticed he had moved.

"You good, Wilbur?" Nick asked.

"Have you heard from Tommy? He called me earlier and left a voicemail but there was no sound. I tried finding him at lunch but he wasn't with you guys, and I've called him a few times but he hasn't answered." Wilbur said.

"When did you last see him?" George asked.

"This morning. Phil drove me to school but Tommy wanted to get breakfast with Techno. I mean, I would have joined them, but me and Techno aren't as close, and he didn't even really seemed like he wanted me to go." He said.

"Did he come back to school?" Clay asked.

"I mean, I assume he did? Phil wouldn't let him skip, and Techno would have driven him."

"We haven't seen him." Nick said. Wilbur hummed at that, glancing down at his phone again.

"That's alright. Thanks though." He quietly made his way back to his seat. George looked at the front and saw the teacher's eyes watching Wilbur, but he didn't say anything and just went back to his computer.

"George, stop doing that." Clay said. George looked up at him, with wide eyes like he had been caught doing something bad even though he had no clue what.

"Doing what?"

"Checking your phone." Clay nodded at the phone in George's hand. "You check it every few minutes."

"I do?" George said slowly. He knew he checked, but he didn't register how often.

"The Red alerts are loud, you know that. So stop." Clay pulled the phone out of his hand and slipped it into George's hoodie pocket. "Out of sight, out of mind. Just do some biology like a good school kid."

"It's not out of mind, though. It's all I've been thinking about." George said through gritted teeth at Clay. Clay should know why George is particularly stressed. He knows George is a hero and has to respond immediately. He *knows*.

"Just relax." Clay said.

George pulled away and stood up, grabbing his book and bag.

"Davidson, sit down." Mr Peterson said. George just walked to the door, aware of all the heads turned in his direction. "George." He said another warning.

"I'm sick." He said, not bothering to glance in his direction as he reached the door.

"Mr Block, you sit down right now as well." Mr Peterson's voice rose. And George gritted his teeth.

He walked through the hall, the exit in mind. He was going to leave and transform.

He heard quick footsteps behind him. Soft footed, but firm strides with long legs and determination.

"Clay, leave me be." George said, not looking over his shoulder where he knew the dirty blonde was.

"Why would I do that? You're being targeted by villains and you're on edge and you stormed out of the room. I'm not letting you be alone." Clay was now by his side, easily matching George's steps.

"I want to be alone."

"I don't want you to be alone."

"And why do you care?" George stopped and turned to face his friend with gritted teeth. He clenched his hands and hid the shakiness by his sides.

"Why do I care? George, you're my best friend."

"And as my best friend you should know when I need to be alone." He argued back.

"And as someone who is in love with you, I know when you *shouldn't*." Clay stepped forward.

"That." George poked his chest. "That right there. I still don't get it. You being... you liking me. You went a whole year of not liking me and then it just suddenly changed one day. Why? When?" George continued prodding his chest.

"I didn't know you well a year ago. We slowly became friends and the more I got to know you, the more I realised how lucky I was." Clay answered simply.

"We've been close for months. Best friends for months. You knew almost everything about me ages ago. When did you realise, and why? Because it doesn't add up and I am pretty certain you've just convinced yourself this stupid friendship is love because I'm a much closer and easier option than the girl who rejected you first." George felt himself start to choke up, but he continued to stare into Clay's eyes. "I think you *decided* to like me when I came out as gay."

"No." Clay's eyes started to glisten, and he grabbed George's wrists. "No. I don't know how many times I can explain it to you. I love you for *you*. I've loved you for longer than I *realised*. Please, George. I don't know how to show you that."

"Well you can start, by *leaving me alone*-" George was shoved to the ground hard by something, pulled from Clay's grasp and landing hard on his back, air being forced out of his lungs.

"George!" He heard Clay's yell, but George was staring at the ceiling, aware of the immense amount of weight pushing against his stomach and chest, and the inability to breathe in any air. He choked and twisted, trying desperately to get any amount of oxygen into his lungs.

He was pinned under a rock of some sort. It covered his entire torso, and extended wide enough to his elbows. He couldn't push it off.

"Oh goody, the Mayor's son too." A woman's voice was heard in the hall. George was aware of the presence beside him, Clay was trying to shift the rock off him.

"Do we think Dream and GNotFound care about him enough too? Would make things a lot easier to trade them both for the jewels rather than go through with Doomsday." A guy's voice, a familiar one at that.

"Move Block to the side, I need to chat with George before he passes out." The Blade's voice was the loudest of the three, and the one to make George's blood run cold.

"George! George, help me push it off you." Clay said desperately, pushing at the rock. George was only able to get fleeting breaths as he twisted, his breathing was extremely shallow, he didn't have enough air to talk.

"Go." He managed to force out, regretting the amount of air it used. Clay obviously didn't move, but a hand grabbed the blonde's shoulder and pulled him backwards harshly without his control.

A woman in pink shoved him against the wall, her super strength able to hold him tight. "No!" Clay shouted.

George squeezed his eyes shut as he tried to push the crushing rock away.

"George Davidson. Finally we meet again, it's been a while. You've been very good at avoiding me." The Blade said, walking over. George unintentionally let out a whimper.

"Please don't hurt him. Let him go." Clay pleaded.

"I'm not going to hurt him. I just need him to say GNotFound's name. Because he knows it." Blade said, looking at Clay with a small amount of amusement.

"He can't even breathe under that thing!" Clay yelled, trying to push away the woman, but she just tsked and pushed him harder against the wall.

"I'll remove it once I manipulate him." Blade said, attention lowering back down to George, who shook his head, every muscle in his head and arms as body tensing as he tried to move the rock.

If he transformed, he could easily get out. But that would cause other issues.

But the worst possible option would be Blade manipulating him. If he transformed, at least he wouldn't give up the Sapphire. But then Blade would know his identity anyway. If he didn't, he'd be manipulated, would tell him who he was, and then hand over the jewel.

He simply couldn't not let himself manipulated.

But there was one other issue. He couldn't even get enough air to say a word. He was only wheezing. It would be a miracle if he could say Mask, let alone Mask on.

"Don't stress, George." Blade said calmly, stepping closer. "This could save the entire city from Doomsday."

The villain bent down and grinned at George, eyes shining through the holes of the boar mask.

He reached out to touch George's arm, and the boy squirmed, trying to pull it away, or get enough air.

"George!" Clay shouted.

"Ma-" George breathed out.

An axe slammed down only inches away from George's arm. The collision of metal on vinyl was loud enough to make anyone jump.

But the slice through flesh and the splatter of blood was enough to make one freeze.

The Blade let out a yell of agony, lifting his arm up away from George, who was staring at an entire hand just inches away from touching him. He had blood splattered on his pale face, eyes wide open in horror but mouth shut to stop the blood from dripping into his mouth.

The axe was lifted back up, and its owner turned to Blade with both his hands on the weapon, and a fiery look in his eyes.

A drop of crimson fell from the heel of Sapnap's axe, its descent to the floor could have been several minutes from George's point of view.

The brunet still being crushed by the weight of the rock just trained his eyes on that one drop. It was dark and pure, and maybe it was truly a sadness that George would never see the vibrancy of the red. Or maybe it was a relief.

When it finally landed on the floor, it stained the cracked and already fading vinyl. It settled on the ground, staring back at George, who finally blinked.

May Doomsday begin.

"My hand!" The Blade yelled, monotone as always. He was clutching the end of his bleeding arm close to his chest.

George could feel the warmth and stickiness of the blood on his face. He could smell it in his nose and taste it in his mouth. It was his first thought, the second being that he still could barely breathe.

Sapnap pushed the rock off him in one shove, and George rolled onto his side instantly, heaving and coughing and gagging.

Sapnap held the axe tight in one hand, and his other on George's shoulder, as the boy threw up whatever small lunch he had only an hour ago, the taste of the Blade's blood finally leaving his mouth, but being replaced by the taste of bile.

"Kill the Mayor's son." The Blade ordered out of anger, the trident in his remaining hand now pointed at Sapnap, who let go of George to match it with his axe.

"Clay." George could only whimper out, as he looked up. Clay was kicked to the floor, and the women held her hands above him, a rock similar to the one crushing George moments prior was slowly forming in her hands, growing bigger and bigger.

"Bolt!" Sapnap shouted, and it felt like the world was set on fire. The entire building cracked open, and a beam of light and energy surged through right to where they were, several feet away, but it made the entire floor shake and crumble, knocking everyone off their feet.

The rock the villain was creating above Clay was only the size of his chest, but he rolled out of its way regardless.

The ceiling above them was cracking too, and the floor was still shaking from the impact.

George stared at the ground under him, his ears ringing from Sapnap's thunderbolt. He could barely register what was going on.

Someone pulled him up by the back of his shirt and picked him up completely. George was going to push himself away until he realised it was Sapnap, and he held on tighter.

Sapnap grabbed Clay's arm as well and tugged him along as he sprinted down the hall. As George's hearing came back, he could hear a siren going off, and screaming. He let his head fall against Sapnap's shoulder, trying to focus on his breaths despite everything. His breathing was still shallow, it still felt like there was pressure on his chest, and his throat stung everytime he breathed, from throwing up.

He could feel the blood on his face, still fresh, but he tried to ignore it for fearing of throwing up again.

They left the school, somehow. Sapnap took them both down a few streets, and into an alleyway, letting go of Clay and then kneeling to the floor, still holding George.

Clay ran to George in Sapnap's arms and gripped his hand.

"George. George, are you ok?" Clay asked, his other hand going to George's hair.

George just nodded, and pushed himself out of Sapnap's arms onto the floor, so he could rest his head and back against the wall of the alley. His breathing was still short and shallow.

He closed his eyes.

He knew it would start today.

He heard Sapnap and Clay talking faintly, and then felt something soft against his face. He opened his eyes and was met with Clay's green ones. He was wiping George's face using a teared bit of fabric, he assumed from his shirt.

"Getting the blood off." Clay mumbled, spitting on the material before wiping it along George's forehead and temple, careful around his eyes.

"Are you alright, George? Do you need the hospital?" Sapnap said, squatting beside them. George shook his head, purposefully taking a few deep breaths.

"I'm fine." He managed to say, hoping words would calm his two best friends down. "Just winded." He forced a smile, and could see the panic in Nick's eyes settle.

Sapnap leaned against the wall with his head, closing his eyes briefly.

"I have to go recharge. You two..." Sapnap glanced between them both. "Actually. Maybe I should take George to my boss. Clay you should go... find your... family or something." He said, trying not to sound suspicious.

"No, I'm fine here. You go. I'll look after George I promise." Clay said. Sapnap stared at him for a few moments, quickly looking at George as well.

"Ok. Well." Sapnap stood up. "Stay safe." He patted Clay on the shoulder, and the blonde smiled up at him.

"You too, Sapnap." He said. Sapnap looked at George too.



"You, especially. Stay out of trouble." Sapnap said.

George stood up before Clay could stop him and hugged Sapnap, clutching the boy tightly. It took Nick by surprise, but he welcomed the hug.

"Thank you." George whispered.

"You're welcome." Sapnap said, patting the boy on the back.

"Please don't get hurt."

"I wouldn't dare." Sapnap grinned.

Nick tried to pull away, but George didn't budge. He laughed slightly, at the same time his bracelet flashed twice.

"What's this for?" He asked.

"Just in case." George whispered, but Sapnap didn't hear it, and he didn't want him to.

When they pulled apart, Sapnap ran off and Clay gently grabbed George's wrist.

He pulled George down, and onto his lap, holding him around the waist with one arm as his other hand came up to continue wiping the drying blood.

"You ok?" Clay asked again, and George just nodded, leaning into him. The blonde's thumb soothingly traced his waist, as Clay gently cleaned his face.

"I gotta go... transform." George took a deep breath.

"Just wait a few minutes, catch your breath." Clay said softly.

"He was going to kill you." George stared at him, tearing up slightly. "He has no mercy."

"I'm fine though."

"What if you die. I can't let you die." George let out a sob and Clay dropped the now bloody shirt piece to pull George closer in an embrace.

"I'm not going to die." He said.

"I don't know what I'd do." George sobbed.

They remained in the hug for several minutes, Clay tracing his fingers along George's back, calming him down slowly.

They both knew they should transform, but they couldn't bear getting up yet. George couldn't bear separating from Clay. And Clay couldn't bear having to lie to George.

Eventually, George pulled back, and they locked eyes. Clay lifted his hand to the side of George's face, palm holding his jaw, and thumb tracing his cheek.

George noticed Clay's eyes flicker down slightly on his face, and his heart began to speed up.

Suddenly there was an explosion, and both George and Clay jumped, the blonde dropping his hand instantly. They both looked back out of the alley.

"Where did that come from?" George asked, taking a deep breath before pushing himself away from Clay and standing up. Clay stood up too.

"It sounded like the school."

George swallowed and looked back at the boy he was in love with, seeing him staring straight back.

"And so it begins."

•

## **CODE RED**

### **Doomsday II - call for all heroes**

•

George put the earpiece into his ear and fiddled with the buttons, hoping it was working.

"Hello?" He tested, hearing a small click as he held down the push-to-talk.

No response.

He knew Sappnap was still recharging, but Dream mustn't have transformed yet, or didn't have his earpiece in.

George pulled out his phone, going to the live news. He was standing on a roof near the school, preparing to go in.

There were multiple live videos, dozens of villains around the city, and countless civilians also causing destruction. It was just like the first Doomsday, except the Blade utilised villains this time.

He had a job to do before he tried to track down the Blade. He needed his family safe first.

His phone began to ring, as he predicted.

"Mom?" He answered.

"George, is that you?"

"Yes, Mom. Where are you?" He asked, hand touching his pendant as he remembered it must alter his voice slightly. He hoped she didn't notice.

"I'm at work. Where's Lexi? Is she with you? Your school was attacked by Blade directly wasn't it?" She said, and George could tell how stressed she was.

"I'm safe. I'm finding Lexi now. I'll text you when we are safe. You stay somewhere low, ok? Hide out. We will come find you when it's over. Have you heard from Dad?"

"I haven't yet. Ring me when you find Lexi and then hide, ok George?"

"I will. I love you, Mom." He said.

"I love you too, Georgie." She whispered, before he hung up.

George pocketed the phone and shook out his arms, before making his way back to the school.

That was where it had began. What George didn't understand was how the Blade managed to manipulate so many people since then.

But he realised that maybe it had been happening for a while. The whole day, Blade could have been going around, manipulating people, but waiting for the right moment to convince them to go mad. He had no timer, and an endless number of manipulations at his disposal.

This felt like a doomed fight.

The school was trashed. Destroyed. It was clear where Sapnap's Bolt had struck, a part of the building had started falling in on itself. And there was a section of the lower levels that had smoke coming out of it.

There were hundreds of students on the nearby streets, all on phones or running to find somewhere to hide away from the school.

But there were also a few students who were clearly manipulated. They were causing fights and chasing after people. George wouldn't be surprised if they started the fire that was spreading through the school.

He pulled out his phone again and called Lexi. It rang out and he didn't get an answer.

He pocketed it again, growing increasingly anxious. *What if she was dead. What if she was hurt. What if she was manipulated.*

His phone began to ring, and he quickly pulled it out and looked at the name.

Drista.

He answered instantly.

"George, where are you? Lexi's hurt." She said.

His heart dropped.

"How hurt? Where are you both?" He said, his hand grabbing a fistful of his hair.

"We ran into some random store a few streets down. The man here is helping us but Lexi keeps asking for you." Drista said.

"Is she ok? Which store?" He asked, jumping off the roof and landing in the street.

"She's sort of ok. Our friend came at her with a knife, and he got cut on the arm." Drista was clearly crying. "Um. I think we are at a... a jewellery store?"

They were at Phil's.

"Have you heard from Clay?" Drista's voice was shaky.

George had left Clay in the alley, instructed him to go to Phil's jewellery store because it would be safe, without explaining why. He even pointed out which way to go.

But he clearly hasn't gone there.

George realised he couldn't go there either. The second he did, Lexi wouldn't let him out of her sight. And he needed to remain GNotFound.

"I saw him a while ago, but we got split up in the chaos. I'm hiding out right now, in a place near a villain. I... I can hear the villain outside." He said, backing up slightly from the direction he was going to run in to find the girls.

"Oh my god. Don't go outside. Just stay there. Is it safe? Where are you?" She asked.

"Yes, it's safe." He said slowly. His back hit a wall. "I'm ok. You keep calling Clay. You tell him where you are, get him to come with you. Stay in that store, it's safe."

"Ok. I will." Drista sniffled. "Here's Lexi."

He heard the phone get passed over.

"George." Lexi spoke.

"How hurt are you?"

"I'm ok. Phil bandaged me up. He's actually Tommy's Dad, so we will be ok. Where are you? Can you come here?" She asked, voice small. George was taken back a few years, when Lexi was younger, in elementary school. She is still just a kid.

"I'm stuck where I am. There's..." He felt himself tearing up. "There's a villain outside. I can't leave. But you stay right where you are, ok? Mom's safe too. I'll come find you when it's over."

"Ok." She whispered.

Neither of them wanted to hang up.

"Oh. Clay's calling you, Drista." Lexi then said. George sighed in relief that at least he knew Clay was alive somewhere.

"Bye. I love you, Lex." He said.

"Love you too." She said back, and the call ended.

George wanted to remove his goggles for a moment, just to wipe his eyes. But he couldn't. He hated the thought of his family being split up. Everyone in different places, Lexi hurt, him running around trying to fix everything for them.

He needed to find his Dad.

He tried to call him, but there was no response, so he began to make his way to the news station. He hoped his father was actually at the station and not out as a reporter somewhere.

He climbed back onto the rooftops and ran in the direction of the station, jumping from building to building.

He could see the mass destruction as he ran. He could hear crashing and yelling and honking and screaming from multiple directions. He could smell the smoke and feel the fear.

And it all left a bad taste on his tongue.

When he reached the tall building for the channel news, he stopped. There was a villain flying around it, a weird mist shooting out of a gun as he flew.

It created a hazy field around the building.

George ran closer, but as he did, he began to feel extremely warm. As he got closer to the mist created by the villain, he could feel the amount of heat coming off it.

It was heating the building.

He looked done and saw people stumbling from the building, and a few more only just coming out of the door.

*"Hello? G? Sapnap?"*

The voice in his ear made George jump, but he quickly reacted, scrambling to respond.

"Dream? Dream where are you?" He spoke into his ear. "I need you now, at the news station tower."

*"On my way. What's the issue?"* He responded instantly.

"A villain is practically boiling the building, we need to take the gem before it kills the people inside." George held down his push-to-talk as he spoke.

He stared at the bottom of the building, trying to see if his father was out. He couldn't see him.

"Fuck. I'm going inside to get the people out. You take his gem." George said, jumping off the roof and running straight towards the mist.

*"Wait, you shouldn't go in. Help me take the jewel."* Dream responded.

"No time. They are going to die." George ran through it, and felt his skin heating up beneath his suit. It was so incredibly hot, his hair had already flattened against his head from sweat.

He pushed onwards, running into the building. He saw some people running towards the exit, and he helped push them out. They were all boiling to touch, skin flushed red and sweat coating them.

"How many people are inside?" He asked a woman, helping her stand and guiding her to the door.

"Most people are- are out. Just a few left." She said.

He ran through, trying to help everyone to get out of the building, relying on the employees that managed to get out on helping their coworkers away from the mist encompassing the building.

*"G? Are you listening? I'm here. What's going on?"* Dream said.

"I'm getting the people out. It's almost everyone. Get the jewel." He ran up the stairs, checking floor to floor. It was basically empty and he was relieved.

*"He can fly! What do I do?"*

"Lure him over to you. I'll come help in a second." George desperately kept running.

He couldn't find his father.

He found two people at their desks. One had passed out, the other was throwing up.

He picked up the one on the floor, throwing her over a shoulder. He then dragged the man to his feet, and ran back to the stairs. The man was stumbling, but keeping up.

"You were on the highest level. Is there no one else?" George asked.

"Didn't see anyone." The man's was panting.

George had an arm around the man and picked him up slightly off the ground to jump down the staircase quicker. He didn't carry two people at once very often. He could do it, he was just an awkward height at times.

He made it to the exit, and ran out, pulling the man with him. He fell to his knees, but two civilians ran over and helped the man up, pulling him away from the boiling building.

George followed them, still holding the woman.

There was a crowd of people a street away, half the people sitting down and recovering, drinking water. Some were standing, watching. Most of them were looking up at the air.

None of them were his father.

George put the woman on the sidewalk, and a few people ran to her aid.

"Thank you, GNotFound." A few words of thanks. He couldn't say much, he had to turn around and looked up as well.

The villain was flying above a building beside the tower, and George could see Dream running around on it, holding his sword up. The villain was shooting more of the transparent mist at him, and Dream was jumping from building to building to avoid it.

George quickly made his way onto the rooftops as well, and snapped his bow.

The villain hasn't seen him yet, still focused on Dream.

"*G, I could really use a hand.*" Dream spoke in his ear, the same time Dream a few rooftops over moved his lips.

George could see the villain had a crown, a jewel in the centre. He didn't even bother trying to deduce a colour. He didn't have time.

"How did two teenagers even end up as heroes?" The villain taunted Dream.

"Talent and good looks." Dream said back, quickly backing up as more mist was sprayed over him.

"Well, as insufferable as you are..." The villain flew directly over Dream, who jumped onto yet another building. "And as young and as immature as you are..." He sprayed where Dream was going to run, and the hero stumbled backwards, tripping and falling onto his ass. "You're actually surprisingly competent."

"I think *that*." Dream wheezed as he tried to catch his breath. It was clear the heat was started to affect him. "Is the nicest thing a villain has ever said to me."

George let an arrow go, and it sliced through the air, colliding perfectly with the crown on top of the villain's head.

The crown was knocked off, and the villain instantly detransformed.

The crown fell first, a clang on the roof.

The civilian fell immediately after, and Dream rushed forward to catch him.

George's eyes widened and he dropped his bow when he recognised the civilian.

His father.

George just stared for a few moments, two rooftops over. Dream looked over, a similar look of complete shock hidden by his mask.

George scooped up his bow and jumped over, immediately landing on his knees beside his father, who Dream was helping sit up.

"Oh my god." George swallowed, itching to reach out and hug him, but held back as a hero.

"Are you alright, Mark?" Dream asked the man, who looked up at them both.

"You took my jewel!" Mark shouted, his face turning to a scowl. He shoved Dream and stood up, backing away. He looked around for the crown.

George just stared at the man in complete horror. Dream instantly got up and dove for the jewelled crown, luckily getting it first before Mark.

"Give it to me!" Mark shouted at Dream.

George was still on the ground.

"You're still manipulated by the Blade." Dream swallowed, glancing at George. "Mark, you aren't in control."

"I don't care! Give it to me!" He yelled.

George rarely heard his father yell. It was only at times where George royally fucked up.

"Why is he still manipulated." George asked, voice small as he looked at the expression on his father's face.

"Blade didn't let go of his manipulation. The villains we usually defeat, he lets them go, and then also takes off his jewel to erase their memory. He's not going to do that today. He can't take off his jewel, and he wants civilians to cause chaos as well." Dream said.

"We can't leave him." George stood up.

"Give me the fucking crown." Mark threw a punch at Dream, who dodged and backed up.

"I know." Dream said to George.

"What do we do?" George wanted to cry.

"This." Dream threw the crown at George, who caught it, and then he grabbed Mark's wrists, pulling them behind his back and securing them with one hand. Dream then picked Mark up and walked to the edge of the roof. Mark was yelling and kicking and trying to get out of the grip.

George just stared at his father being held by Dream like he weighed nothing. It was the strangest thing he had ever seen, and the last thing he expected today.

"Where are you taking him?" George started to worry.

"To his home. Locking him in a room should keep him contained. He has no powers. The worst he would do is destroy the room. But at least he would be safe from hurting himself or others. You try and track down the Blade and I'll meet back with you after." Dream said, looking at George for approval of the plan

George stared at Dream.

"Yeah." He said softly, glancing at his father. "Take him home."

Dream smiled and jumped off the building. George let out a breath and quickly pulled out his phone, calling his Mom when he was certain Dream was out of sight.

"George? Did you find Lexi?" Lorna asked immediately.

"No, I'm hiding from a villain. But Drista called me. She and Lexi are hiding out at a store. They are safe. Lexi hurt her arm, but she's alright."

"Ok. Ok, that's good."

"Mom... Dad's been manipulated." George said softly.

He expected his mother to be upset, or confused, or scared.

"Again? Oh my god." She muttered. George's eyes widened.

"What do you mean, *again*."

"Oh." She said. "He was manipulated the first Doomsday. It was his fault the high school burnt down the first time." She said.

George blinked.

"Dad burnt down a school?" He grinned. "Why didn't you tell me? I would have been the coolest kid in school." He said.

"Didn't want to frighten you. Is he ok? How did you know he was manipulated?"

"He was a villain. My friend... texted me about it. Apparently Dream was taking him somewhere safe. He's ok."

"Ok." Lorna breathed out. "Everyone's ok."

"Yep." George breathed out too. "That's all I needed to know."

The call ended and George let out a breath. He secured his family. That was the main thing that concerned him. Now he could focus on the fight. He could focus on fighting the Blade.

He was going to save the city.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry this was a little later than usual.

Had a bit of writers block with this chapter but I pushed it out.



Probably a ton of mistakes

And so it begins.

# Doomsday Part One

## Chapter Summary

Doomsday has only just begun but it feels like it will never end

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*Boom.*

George flinched.

*Crash.*

He closed his eyes.

*A scream.*

He sat down, head in his hands. It was too much. There was too much going on, he couldn't do any of it.

There was a comforting hand on his shoulder, and he looked up at Dream.

"You need a minute?" He asked.

"We don't have a minute." George responded, an explosion from the other side of the city reaching their eardrums. "It never ends! We've stopped dozens of fights and people and a few villains already. But it just keeps going. Blade hasn't shown for half an hour and the city is destroying itself." George said, putting his head back in his hands.

"It will end eventually. Blade will show soon, he just wants a bit more chaos." Dream said patiently.

"We can't wait forever. People could be dying, Dream. People are getting hurt. And I can't help them all." George looked across the city. They knew this was going to happen. They knew what was coming.

Why did they do nothing to prevent it.

"We are trying our best." Dream said calmly.

"Our best isn't enough."

George felt his phone buzz, and gestured for Dream to look away as he pulled it out. It was more messages from Drista, saying Clay called her earlier and said he was hiding somewhere earlier, but he hasn't messaged her since then, or arrived at Phil's, and she was getting more worried.

George just reassured her that Clay must be fine. And he tried to believe it himself. If anything happened to Clay, it would be his fault. He was the one who left him in an alleyway. Alone. *Again.*

"Why do I have to turn around?" Dream asked, scratching his sword along the ground.

"Because you can't see my phone or who I'm talking to. You don't know my identity." George responded, quickly typing a few messages to Clay, before switching off his phone and pocketing it in the suit again.

"Right." Dream responded, jaw tense.

"Have you messaged your family at all? Reassured them you're ok?" George said, turning to look at his partner.

"I did once. But my phone died so I can't anymore." Dream sighed.

*"Hey, uh. Guys..."* Sapnap's voice came through their earpieces.

"You good, Sapnap?" Dream asked.

*"No. I can't feel my legs, and the villain has a fucking bow-"* He cut himself off with a yell.

"Can't feel your legs?" George stood up.

*"Paralysis. I can feel it creeping up my spine. I'm crawling away at the moment but I..."* Sapnap groaned. *"I got shot in the ass. I mean, it doesn't hurt at least because of the paralysis, but if my entire body goes completely numb then I can't defend this villain from taking my bracelet."*

"You got hit in the-" Dream let out a wheeze, doubling over and holding his own stomach. "The ASS."

"It's not funny, Dream. He could lose his Diamond. Sapnap, where are you?" George said, shooting Dream a glare, who was holding onto his knees for support as he continued to laugh.

*"Near the theatre."*

Once Dream calmed down slightly, they both started making their way to the only movie theatre in the city, running through the streets where cars had been abandoned, houses broken into, trash everywhere and a concerning amount of smoke.

They ran all the way to the movie theatre but there was no sight of Sapnap or a villain.

"Sap, where are you? We are at the theatre." George said.

*"I don't know. We ran a street away and then I got shot and escaped somehow. Guys, I can't feel my torso. Only my arms and head."*

"Which street did you go down?" George said, but before Sapnap could respond, George was shoved to the ground by Dream, as an arrow whizzed over them.

"Maybe the two of you will be able to tell me where Sapnap went. He crawled away like a baby and I lost him." The two heroes looked up to see a villain in light blue pointing a bow at them, a grin on her face.

"Move." George pushed Dream off and jumped off, pulling Dream with him out of the way as the villain shot another two arrows their way.

"Come baaaack." The villain taunted, as George dragged Dream down the nearest street.

*"Guys, I can't move my arms anymore."*

"We found the villain, Sapnap. Just stay where you are. Are you hidden? Where?" Dream said.

*"Behind some car."*

George turned back around to fire his own arrow at the villain, but it missed.

"A battle of the archers. Who is the better bow master?" The villain said, shooting an arrow at George, who jumped out of the way.

"I reckon it's me." Dream said, wielding his sword. Both the villain and George scoffed at that ridiculous comment.

"You have a sword." The villain said.

"And I'd still be better than the two of you."

An arrow narrowly missed Dream's face.

George kept backing up, keeping his bow trained on the villain, releasing a few arrows. Until his back hit something.

A groan came from behind, and George spun around, realising he was against a car. He looked around the side of it to see none other than Sapnap lying on the ground

"You found him!" The villain yelled in delight, and George's eyes went wide as he looked back at the villain, who was starting to run over.

Dream met her halfway, sword in hand. The villain just dodged his hits, firing her own shots. George kneeled beside Sapnap.

"You ok?"

"Won't... beeee abe... to t'lk in min'te." Sapnap's speech was slurred.

"We will take her jewel and it'll be fixed." George said.

"G!" Dream yelled and George looked just in time to dodge an arrow coming his way. He retaliated with his own arrows.

"Let me through!" The villain shouted.

"Dream, defend Sapnap." George said, eyes still on the villain as they each took turns firing arrows and dodging.

"Project." Dream said, dissolving into two. George's eyes widened. Dream had used his power.

The villain spun around to see which Dream was the real one but she didn't see. One Dream ran to Sapnap, standing above him with sword in hand. The other stayed where he was, armed, and with gritted teeth.

"Dream, you fucking idiot." George seethed, firing shot after shot.

"Don't call me an idiot." Dream said, running circles around the villain, trying to get close enough to strike them with his sword. The villain had a pendent.

"You wouldn't leave Sapnap unguarded. That's the real Dream." The villain took a shot at the one standing above Sapnap, but he dodged, glaring at the villain.

"Wouldn't you like to know." Dream said. George wasn't even sure which one was the real one.

"This is so entertaining. Thank goodness we were near the theatre." A voice came from above.

George looked up, and saw the Carnelian villain, in red and white, sitting on the edge of a roof, a bowl of theatre popcorn in his arms. He gave George a wave but the blue hero was too stunned to do anything.

"G!"

George looked back in time to see an arrow shot right at him. He barely had time to react.

"Shield!" He shouted, arms coming up in front of him, feeling the blue energy surround him.

But a sharp hit made him fall over. He gasped and immediately clutched his side. The arrow had hit him, right in the soft spot between his ribs and pelvis on his left side.

"G!" Dream shouted again, his voice muffled through the shield.

George felt an old coolness spreading down his left side, itching closer to his spine. He shuddered, and realised the arrow wound didn't even hurt.

He reached over with his right arm and yanked out the arrow, throwing it away.

Dream was still running around the villain, sword in hand. The Dream standing near Sapnap was watching George carefully, eyes full of concern.

"Shit." George said, looking up at the red and white villain who was watching him with pure excitement in his eyes.

"Shoot Dream next! Then we can take all their jewels!" He egged on the light blue villain, a bit of popcorn falling out of his box.

George looked back at the Dream standing by Sapnap, and noticed he flickered slightly. George's scowled as he looked back at the Dream fighting the villain.

*He left Sapnap unguarded.*

Dream tried to jump at the villain with his sword, but the villain dodged the hit, and Dream stumbled. The only thing that succeeded from his attack was that the villain now had his back turned away from George.

George felt his left arm slowly going numb. It had barely any strength in it but it was his dominant hand, what he usually used to pull the string back.

He weakly moved the bow into his left hand, his grip strength not reliable, but he pulled the string back with his right hand instead.

He dropped his shield, and let the arrow go with a huff, as the bow slipped from his left hand simultaneously.

His arrow hit the villain square in the back, and they screamed and fell to their knees.

George was lying on his side, his entire left side and leg now completely numb, and he could feel the sensation creeping across his torso, and up the side of his neck.

Dream knocked the bow of the villain out of her hand, and shoved her to the floor. He then ripped the pendant off, and stood back up.

George felt the sensation stop creeping across his body, but it hadn't disappeared yet.

Dream helped the woman sit up, but she yelled at him, shoving and kicking him. She was still manipulated, of course.

So Dream just ran over to George, rolling him onto his back.

"Can you move? Are you ok?" He asked.

"It's going away slowly. Can't move my left side. Check Sapnap is ok." George said, using his right hand to press against the painless wound on his side. His eyes widened. "Wait, the Carnelian!" George said, looking back up at the roof.

But the villain was gone.

"Damn it." Dream muttered, before jogging over to the Sapnap. "You good?"

"You both..." Sapnap's words were slow. "Used your powers."

George closed his eyes with a sigh. They were screwed.

"It's fine. We will have to go recharge, you keep us updated, ok?" Dream said.

"I can't do it alone." Sapnap said, his voice becoming more normal as the numbness was wearing off of his mouth.

"You can. You got this. There's a reason you're the Diamond." Dream said.

"Your ring." Sapnap said, and George assumed it had flashed twice.

"I know." Dream said, jogging back over to George and helping him sit up. His feeling was slowly coming back to his left side, pins and needles all along his left arm and torso. His leg still wasn't moveable at all.

George groaned as pain was also slowly coming back to the wound in his side. He could feel it healing but the process was slow. It wouldn't heal by the time he detransformed.

"Can you just take me somewhere to hide." George said, letting his weight fall onto Dream, because his right hand was preoccupied with keeping pressure on his wound.

"We will go together. I'm not going to leave you to recharge by yourself while you're injured. What if you pass out or die and you don't retransform?" Dream said.

"Dream." George said sternly. "You can't know who I am."

"But-"

"I don't care. Take me to L's or something." But George recalled that was where his sister was.

"No. Don't do that. Just take me into that house." He nodded at a nearby broken door.

"That house is destroyed." Dream picked George up completely, and the movement made him hiss.

"Just take me somewhere and then leave and find your own place." He said, just as his pendent flashed twice.

"We should move far from here, because Carnelian saw us and could tell the Blade to search this area. We can't defend ourselves as civilians." Dream said.

"You're gonna leave me here?" Sapnap called.

"The numbness will go away soon. You'll heal from your... ass wound..." Dream chuckled. "Soon. We have to go, we are transforming."

"Alright. Bye." Sapnap scoffed, slowly sitting up.

Dream ran off with George in his hold, out onto the main road.

"Where are we going?" George asked, leaning his head against Dream's chest.

"I'm not entirely sure. Until I find somewhere quiet." Dream responded.

George sighed, closing his eyes for a moment.

"How bad is the injury?" Dream asked.

"It's fine. Will be painful when I detransform, but I won't die of blood loss or anything. It's not too deep, but there is a bit of blood." George said.

Dream hummed in response.

"You're an idiot. Why did you use your power? And you didn't even protect Sapnap like I said, your double did." George said, annoyance returning.

"It was fine. I couldn't leave you to fight the villain alone. But I didn't want her to think Sapnap was completely vulnerable."

"But if you had just hit her with your sword or touched her, or if she shot an arrow at your double, she would have known. You risked Sapnap's life and identity, Dream." George said sternly, staring at the mask.

"It was fine, it worked out."

"It was impulsive." George gritted out.

"It was an instinct. And I followed it." Dream sighed. "I know you and L call me impulsive but you remember, it's actually the point of my jewel. I act before I have the chance to overthink it, because my gut tells me it's the best option. And it usually is, unless I'm distracted." He said.

George didn't respond.

"When you guys tell me I'm impulsive, sometimes it sounds like a bad thing, but I think in most situations, it's good. And I know that. You don't have to agree with me but that's what I believe." Dream said, pursing his lips.

"You're right." George said after a few moments. "I'm sorry. I only dismiss it because I work the completely opposite way. I like to plan first, think of every possible consequence. You don't do

that, and you're right, it works in your favour." He said, looking away from Dream's face. "I'm not good at those kinds of decisions."

"But I'm not good at what you do. Sometimes it's important to plan and think of options and consequences. Because sometimes yeah, I mess up or don't factor something in. Our skills work better in different scenarios. That's what makes us a great team." Dream smiled, and George looked back up at him.

"And where does Sapnap fit in?"

"He's here to keep us in check, I reckon." Dream chuckled, and it made George smile.

A few minutes passed, and George could move his left arm now. His leg was tingling, but he still couldn't properly move it.

Dream's ring started rapidly flashing, and he stopped running in surprise.

"In there. It looks empty." George said, pointing at an icecream store nearby. It was the one he went to with Clay.

Dream kicked the door open and slammed it shut behind him, locking it while still holding George.

"Hello?" He called out. There was no response, so he ran out the back of the store and into a room, also shutting and locking the door.

"What are you doing? You have to go too!" George said, as Dream placed him on his feet on the floor, still holding him up by his waist.

"It's fine."

"*Dream*. We can't know each other's identities. We are so close. Just leave." George said, as Dream helped him sit down on the floor.

"It's fine. I trust you. We can close our eyes." Dream whispered, a small smile on his face before he quickly went to a nearby bench and grabbed a dishtowel.

"Dream, just go."

"I'm not leaving you." Dream kneeled beside George and held the cloth against George's bleeding side. He looked into his goggles, imagining the eyes he knew too well.

"Nothing you say will make me leave you." Dream said, his other hand coming up to touch George's cheek.

His ring flashed bright, and George had to force himself to close his eyes, breaking the eye contact they had, as Dream detransformed.

"You can detransform too." Clay said softly after a few moments, still holding the towel against George. The brunette shook his head.

"Turn around. We'll go back-to-back." George whispered. He was hyper-aware of the fact that Dream's real face was inches away from his own. All it took to know who the boy was, was to simply open his eyes.

George hated how badly he wanted to, how much his eyelids were pulling, tugging, pleading with him to give in. To know Dream.



Clay smiled and suppressed a soft laugh. But he obeyed, and turned around, as George turned around as well.

George leaned against him the second their backs touched and opened his eyes. He hated how disappointed he was that Dream listened.

"I should wait for it to detransform me. So I can heal for as long as possible." George said, adjusting the towel against the wound.

"Yeah." Clay said softly, and then the Sapphire pendent started buzzing.

When George detransformed, he tensed at the pain his Sapphire had been muting slightly, and he sucked in a breath. Clay felt the boy tense, and felt a pang in his heart knowing George was hurting.

He slowly looked to his right, and could see George's soft brown hair in his peripheral, making him smile. He glanced down and saw George's left hand on the floor, holding himself up as he held the towel to his side with his right.

"Still numb?" He whispered.

"Just tingly." And Clay could hear his voice more clear. The suits must mask it ever so slightly, but this was undeniably George if he looked for it. Clay wouldn't have noticed a difference if he wasn't searching for it. So he was confident George wouldn't recognise him.

Clay looked straight ahead again, letting his head fall back so it was touching George's, and he reached out to his side with his right hand slowly.

When his pinky touched George's, the boy jumped slightly. But he relaxed, and gave in, letting Clay gently hold his hand.

"You ok?" Clay whispered.

"Only hurts a little bit." George winced, closing his eyes.

"You're a liar." Clay said with a smile.

"I know." George whispered back, letting his head press further against the boy behind him.

They sat in silence for another minute.

"Thanks for not leaving me." George whispered, closing his eyes.

"Like I said. I would never."

There was an explosion nearby, and George tensed up, hand gripping Clay's back just as tight.

"When will it end." He mumbled.

"Soon." Clay intertwined their fingers and rubbed his thumb against George's without looking over.

"Soon." George repeated.

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"Still no sign of him?" George asked into his earpiece.

*"None. It's been over an hour since Doomsday began and Blade hasn't made a sign since the attack at the school."* Sapnap responded.

George looked over at Dream, who was watching the transformed hero carefully. They were standing on the roof of the icecream store they hid in. George's wound had resumed healing and he already felt pain relief when he transformed.

"What do we do? An hour of people getting hurt and maybe dying. We can't waste more time." George said.

"There's not much we can do until the Blade makes an appearance." Dream reassured him.

George sighed, and gestured for Dream to turn around again as he pulled out his phone. He had texted his family a few times while he was recharging. Clay didn't respond once, and Drista was growing more and more worried. She wanted to call George, but he had to decline because Dream was in the room.

Something might have happened to Clay, before he could make his way to Phil's store.

Phil had texted a few times too, asking questions about what's going on and where they are, if they'd seen the Blade, or any of his sons. George had barely any answers.

Phil at least told him that his sister was fine. He locked the girls safely in a spare room in the basement, that wasn't near the safe of gems.

*"Guys. I spoke too fucking soon."* Sapnap's voice came through both their ears, and George quickly pocketed his phone.

"What?" Dream responded, holding down the button.

*"The Blade. He's made an appearance at the city centre."*

"You serious?" George said, eyes wide.

*"Yeah. He's still hand-less too. From when I cut it off at the school saving George and Clay."* Sapnap said.

"I thought he should have healed by now? Especially since he doesn't have to transform back." George said, talking to both Dream and Sapnap.

*"Well come take a look for yourself."*

George and Dream started running towards the city centre, leaping across buildings like they always had. There was more at stake this time, it didn't feel as freeing.

"Sapnap, where abouts are you?" George asked through his headpiece. He didn't get an answer, because the hero himself called out to them on a building over. Dream and George ran over and joined Sapnap.

"Where's Blade?" Dream asked.

"Like I said, city centre." Sapnap gestured behind him with his thumb. "Has that red villain with him too. The one who was watching at the paralysis villain fight, and you said something about him enhancing Blade's powers?" Sapnap said. George nodded.

"That's good we know where he is. If we take that villain's jewel, then everyone will stop being

manipulated." Dream said.

"We should focus on the Carnelian more than the Blade." George nodded along. "He doesn't have a weapon that comes with his jewel, so he should be easier to defeat."

"L said he gets a timer when he's dying. If I just stab him again, then we don't even have to take the Carnelian, he will detransform himself, and then we can fight the Blade at the same time." Dream suggested. George glared at him.

"That's a civilian being manipulated."

"What if it's not, G?" Dream argued back. "Blade took them away from the fight last time, maybe because the jewel was important but maybe because the person was important too. It could be a friend who knows the Blade and knows his plans and is going along with it."

"You still shouldn't try to kill him. We don't know enough."

"I could cut off Carnelian's hand too?" Sapnap said, and George looked at him, almost forgetting he was here.

"There's a villain near 7th street. They are making small tornados destroying buildings and homes and roads. You need to go fight them." George said.

"But the Blade is right over there. The three of us could go in and just end it now." Sapnap said with furrowed eyebrows.

"I told you, me and Dream will handle it. You need to save the people." George said, crossing his arms over his chest. "You promised me."

Sapnap gritted his teeth and glanced at Dream as well, who said nothing, he didn't want to get in the middle of the argument.

"Fine." He forced out, flipping his coin into his axe. "You call for me if anything goes wrong."

"Of course. And one more thing, if you have time. Can you check on the whereabouts of Clay Block? You said you left him and George in an alley." George said, and Sapnap froze, glancing briefly at Clay who had straightened.

"Yeah. They should still be there." Sapnap said slowly.

"No, Clay is missing. They both separated and I know George is safe because I made sure of it, but Clay wasn't there. His sister is at L's apparently, worried about him. But I don't know where Clay is. If you find him, take him to L and let me know. Ok?" George said.

He never should have just left Clay there, but the blonde had assured George he'd make his way to Phil's, and that George should go transform and meet Dream. And George stupidly listened.

"I'm sure Clay Block is fine." Dream chimed in with a small, nervous laugh. "It's really not a priority."

"If you have time." George said to Sapnap, ignoring Dream's comment.

"Ok." Sapnap looked at Dream again. "If I have time."

"Thank you. Keep us updated on your progress with the villain."

Sapnap just nodded, and with that, he ran away. George sighed and looked at Dream.

"Alright, we-" George stopped talking, eyes going wide as he looked at something beyond Dream.

"What?" Dream grew concerned.

George just snapped his bow, drew an arrow and shot it. Dream spun around to see what was happening, just in time to see a villain in brown jump off the building, their dark brown cape flying behind them.

"What was that." Dream said, running to the edge with George to watch them run off.

"I don't know. They were just sitting there, watching us." George said, shooting them once more as they ran through the street, towards the city centre.

"For how long?"

"I don't know."

George took a deep breath and turned to look at Dream.

"Ok. We need a plan." He said.

Dream slowly turned to him, a smirk on his face. He held up his sword, which glinted in the sun.

"Dream... don't you *dare*-"

The green hero jumped off the building before George could finish his sentence, and started sprinting after the villain in brown. George made a sound of frustration and tugged on his hair in annoyance. Before he too, jumped after his partner.

He huffed and held down the button on his ear.

"*Dream*. We needed a plan first! Don't just run straight into danger."

"*You're right here with me, G. It's fine*." He could hear Dream's smirk.

"No, you just took off. You fucking idiot."

"*And you followed me. Like you always do. I think you're obsessed with me*." Dream gloated.

"What! No. Of- of course not. What the fuck." George scoffed.

"*Can you stop flirting on the radio. It's distracting me from trying not to get demolished by a tornado*." Sapnap's voice chimed in.

"Shut up Sapnap!" George and Dream both yelled into the mics.

"Dream. Don't let Blade know we have earpieces." George spoke.

Dream didn't respond, so George ran quicker.

He ran out the end of the street into the large city square. The city hall was still under the process of being cleaned up after Sapnap destroyed it. The rest of the plaza was a mess as well, like the rest of the city.

Dream stood near where George ran out, sword up and stance ready. Because across the square

were three figures.

The Blade, the Carnelian villain, and the brown one they just saw.

George walked up beside Dream, elbowing him in the side, making Dream huff and turn at him with a look that said *what the hell was that for?*

"For running off." George scoffed. Dream elbowed him back, lightly, and George just rolled his eyes.

"Don't roll your eyes. You did it first." Dream said. George furrowed his eyebrows and turned back to look at Dream.

"How could you tell I was roll-"

"Dream. GNotFound." The Blade's voice yelled at them from the several yards between them. George turned his attention back to the villain.

"Blade." Dream acknowledged him. "And your little side-kick that is apparently still kicking." He gestured at the red and white villain.

"It takes more than a little cut from your sword to get rid of me." Carnelian said, crossing his arms across his chest and glaring at the heroes.

"And who is this, we haven't met." George gestured to the brown villain.

"No one important. Just doing me a little favour." Blade said with a shrug. "He has the power of super hearing. Can hear every little thing going on in your conversation earlier and in those stupid little ear pieces that you thought would help." Blade said, thumping the villain in brown on the shoulder. His hair was brown too, spiked up with a white streak. His face however, was covered with dark glasses over his eyes, similar to George's goggles but like sunglasses. His cape was more of a long jacket, covering a hint of yellow.

He looked incredibly bored.

"*Fuck my life. GNotFound, do you think if I used my Bolt on the tornado it would destroy it? Or would it make it worse.*" Sapnap's voice echoed in their ears, and the villain in brown chuckled, talking quietly to the Blade, who grinned.

"Seems like Sapnap is struggling. Maybe one of you should go help him." He said. George glared at the Blade, before raising his hand to hold down his earpiece.

"Don't waste your power. We can't afford you to recharge again. And don't say anything important over the radio."

"*Why? Is it rigged? Is someone listening?*"

George didn't respond, but he flicked the switch so he didn't have to hold down the button to talk. Sapnap would be able to hear everything.

"Now. We can finally have a chat." The Blade stepped forward. He wasn't holding his trident, one free hand gesturing as he spoke. His other was by his side, but it was just his arm. His hand still hadn't grown back. *Sapnap was right.*

"People are dying." The Blade said, and as if it was planned, screams came from neighbouring

streets. "It can all end very quickly and easily by just the two of you."

"By handing over our jewels. Yeah we know." Dream scoffed.

"Everyone wins. I get what I've wanted for years. And you still get the glory of saving the day. And that's what you want isn't it?" He asked, grinning.

"No. We want to protect the city. We don't care for glory. Why do you want the jewels? What do they do?" George said.

"It's none of your concern. I assure you it is not as destructive as this. Doomsday." Blade gestured around him, the entire city in his hands.

"If you're willing to destroy a city and the people in it, for a few jewels, then I have a feeling it may be more destructive and powerful than you're letting on." George said. The Blade shrugged.

"Well, you could hand them over and see what happens."

"No." Dream said simply, and the Blade chuckled.

"No? Well, that's your decision. I thought you cared about the people in this city. I thought you said you would protect them and fight for them. But here we are. People are hurt and dying, and you've done nothing. Some *heroes* you are." He laughed.

George and Dream said nothing.

"Well. If an entire city and injured people aren't enough for you to care, then maybe someone you *actually* care about would bring you more incentive." The Blade started pacing, and George seized up, looking at Dream, who looked back.

"*What.*" Sapnap's voice echoed through. "*He has someone you care about? Is that what he's saying?*"

George swallowed. There's no way. The Blade doesn't even know their identities, he couldn't have someone the care about.

"I wasn't sure you cared about him, but I figured he was important anyways. Given his *father.*" The Blade smirked, and George's blood ran cold.

"I have Clay Block."

George felt sick. There's no way.

"No you don't." Dream said, hands in fists. "Nice try."

"Oh, but are you sure of that, Dream? Want to risk it? I have the Mayor's son in a safe place. And all it takes is one order from me." He tapped his own temple. "And he's gone."

"*He's lying. He's lying, he has to be.*" Sapnap said.

"What if he isn't." George whispered, staring at Blade.

"*No, he is.*"

"G, he heard us talking about Clay Block, and you sending Sapnap to look for him. He's using that knowledge from the hearing villain to lie to you." Dream said.

The Blade laughed and shrugged.

"I mean. There's a reason you couldn't find him, correct? I wouldn't have any reason to lie to you GNotFound." Blade said, his toothy grin smug and taunting.

George's hand went to his own pendent resting against his chest.

"Prove that you have Clay." George demanded. The Blade scoffed at that, like it was a ridiculous request.

"What proof do I need? We found him in an alley, and he is currently being held captive on the west side of the city." He said.

"No." George said, voice shaky. "No, you don't have him."

"Oh, but I do, GNotFound. I have Clay Block." The Blade said, eyes glistening with amusement as he stared at the heroes.

"He's lying, G. He doesn't have Clay, he just wants your pendent." Dream said, only looking at George, praying for him to believe him.

"But... we don't *know* where Clay is. Blade could have him." George said, clutching his Sapphire.

"G, I need you to trust me." Dream grabbed his shoulders, trying to get his attention. "Clay is *safe*. Do not believe anything he says." Dream desperately pleaded with George, eyes trained on the small hand clutching his pendent.

"I-" George looked between the Blade and Dream. "I can't risk it." He whispered.

*"I found Clay! Guys, I-I found Clay. He-he's safe!"* Sapnap's voice came through their earpieces.

"What." George said, eyes widening.

*"I found him, he's near the school, hiding in a... a house. I'm taking him to L now."* Sapnap said.

Dream was frozen, hands slowly lowering from George's shoulders.

"You found... you *found* Clay." Dream said slowly.

*"Yes. Dream. I did. So you know Blade is lying now. Right? Right guys?"*

George breathed out in relief, not noticing how tense Dream still was.

"Fucking idiot. Someone go kill Sapnap." Blade yelled, voice echoing around the square.

"Sapnap, don't go to L's. Just hide Clay somewhere safe. Someone may follow you." George said.

*"Yessir."* Sapnap responded.

"You... *found*... Clay." Dream said again, slowly.

*"Yes. Dream. Trust me."*

George held up his bow, taking a few steps towards the Blade.

"You're a fucking coward, you know that Blade." George said. He was so fucking relieved Sapnap had found Clay. He had no one left to worry about.

"Me? A coward? Sorry, who nearly handed over their powers because they thought one boy was in danger?" Blade pouted, mocking George. "If you weren't a coward you would have fought me for him. But no, you were just about ready to throw over your Sapphire and call it a day. If you're so ready to do that, why not get it over with now?"

George shot an arrow, and it narrowly missed the Carnelian villain when he jumped out of the way.

"What the fuck, man!" Carnelian said.

"Oh, so that's how we are doing things. Alright." Blade said, and then grinned and pulled out a stick of some sort and snapping it in half using his hand and thigh. It transformed into a trident which he held in his right hand.

George didn't wait for his retaliation, he didn't want to wait for whatever Blade had planned.

George ran forward, shooting several arrows at all three villains. The Carnelian flipped out of the way, dodging every single hit. Blade used his trident expertly to knock them away as if they were simply bothersome paper airplanes. The villain in brown unsheathed a sword, before he too, ran away from the shower of arrows.

*"Guys, I'm joining you. You're versing three villains."*

"Sapnap. No." George spoke, running after the Carnelian villain. "Dream, you hold off Blade and the other villain." He also said, knowing Dream was running forward brandishing his sword as well.

*"GNotFound, you need me."* Sapnap pleaded.

"I said, NO." George yelled into the mic, reaching up to flick the switch so it was back to push-to-talk.

The red and white villain was spectacular at dodging, doing flips and dives and jumps for every arrow.

"You suck ass!" Carnelian shouted, running away while laughing. George heard the clanging of steel behind him, and turned briefly to see Dream and the brown villain sword-fighting.

He looked at Blade, who hadn't moved since the fight began, and the villain just grinned at George, before snapping his fingers.

The second he did, the ground started rumbling. George looked around to see everything shaking, and it was going stronger and stronger.

*"Is that a fucking earthquake?"* Sapnap said in his ear.

George didn't respond, just watched in horror as the still-under-construction stage where he received his Medal of Valor months ago started to crumble once again. Buildings in the near vicinity were shaking too. Car alarms were going off, poles were knocking to the floor, glass was shattering and people were yelling.

George was so preoccupied with watching the destruction, that he wasn't prepared to be knocked to the ground himself, weight on his back, his bow going flying out of his grip.

"I got him! Blade!" Carnelian shouted from above, a small dagger pressing into the back of George's neck.



George brought an arm out from his side and swung his shoulder backwards, elbowing the villain in his side. George used his strength to flip them over, so he was pinning the Carnelian to the floor, the dagger on the ground

George reached for the red pendent on his chest, but before he could, his arm was sliced by a sharp blade and he pulled away with a shout. Blood was flooding down his forearm to his fingertips, and he looked up to see the villain in brown standing above him, sword pointed and digging into George's chest.

"G!" Dream shouted, and George glanced over to see the hero fighting with Blade, trident against sword. The Blade may have one hand but he was good with his weapon.

"Sapphire. Get it." The brown villain said, and Carnelian sat up quickly, eyes trained on George.

George was breathing heavily, a sword on his chest and his bow out of reach. He really didn't want to use his power so soon.

"G!" Dream shouted again. "Here!"

The throw was fast, and George understood his call before the villains did. Dream's sword landed in George's outstretched hand, and he used it to push the long blade away from himself, meeting the arm of the Carnelian, slicing him as well.

George scrambled to his feet and took several steps back. His left arm was cut deep, blood still dripping but he could feel the tissue slowly healing. The Carnelian villain was shouting about his own sliced arm, and the brown villain was pulling him away from George.

The weight of Spirit in George's hand felt heavier than natural. It felt like the sword was pointing for Dream, like it was drawn away from George.

*"I got the tornado villain's ring. I'm coming to help now."* Sapnap said.

"No. You fucking heard me the first time, we had a deal." George pressed his finger to the button, talking sternly into the mic as he ran away from the two villains, scooping up his bow and running at Dream, who was backing away from the Blade, now weaponless. "You aren't coming here. I don't want you at this fight."

*"G, we need his help."* Dream said.

The earthquake was easing slightly now, but the ground was still shaking beneath them and the sounds of falling and breaking objects and structures were still echoing around the plaza

Blade swiped at Dream's feet, and the green hero jumped to avoid it, but the unsteady ground made his ankle twist on the landing, and he fell to the floor.

"Dream!" George yelled, still running, as Blade held the trident to Dream's neck. George threw the sword back with another shout, hoping Dream would catch it.

Blade dropped his trident and tried to grab Dream's neck with his bare hand, but the sword George threw was caught by Dream, who cut the Blade's shoulder before he was touched. The villain yelled and pulled back, and Dream quickly got up and ran backwards, holding his sword tight with two hands, out in front of him.

Blade retrieved his trident, not bothering to look at the wound in his shoulder of his handless arm. And he turned to glare at GNotFound, who had stopped running, clutching his arm that was slowly

bleeding less.

"I have to admit, you two have put up a good fight this past year and a half. Pathetic, but for two kids, you're more stubborn than I expected." Blade said, a dry laugh as he shook out his shoulder.

George looked over at the other two villains. Carnelian was still bleeding as well, and if looks could kill, the glare from his bright blue eyes would have been enough to end George.

*"He can only manipulate with his hands. He had to drop his trident to touch me."* Dream said into the headset so Sapnap could hear as well. Blade could hear him loud enough regardless of the hearing villain, but Dream didn't seem to care he was heard.

"Sapnap owes me a hand." Blade seethed.

"Why aren't you healing it back?" George asked.

"You think *I* fucking know!" Blade yelled back, looking down at his arm. It wasn't bleeding or oozing. It looked like it had healed, but forgot the actual hand.

George looked back at the two villains, keeping a close eye on them in case one of them tries something.

"How old is that one." George said, nodding at the Carnelian. "He has the maturity of a middle schooler. Are you hiring kids to help you?"

"Depends. Didn't Liberator hire kids as well?" Blade said with a scoff, pointing between the two of them with his trident.

George didn't respond, he looked over at Dream.

"At least I actually get the job done myself. I don't hide behind teenagers like a coward." Blade said, tapping his trident on the ground as he smiled at the two heroes, having to turn to look between them both.

"No, you just hide behind other people who you manipulate and force gems into their hands. Same thing." Dream pointed out.

"I'm here aren't I? I don't see Liberator anywhere. Where is he? Where's he hiding? Where are the rest of my gems?" Blade asked.

George looked back once again at the Carnelian, who was shaking out his arm. He was healing, but it was clearly slow. They needed to get his pendent. If they get the Carnelian, then everyone in the city will go back to normal. It will just be Blade verse the heroes. No people getting hurt or hurting others.

It was times like these he wished he could telepathically speak to Dream.

But sometimes it seems that boy knows what he's thinking before he's even thought it.

Dream sprinted again, and the small break in their fight ended. Everyone jumped into action, as Dream ignored the Blade and went straight towards Carnelian.

The brown villain ran forward to meet Dream with his sword again, but George was firing arrows and making it difficult for him, having to dodge them and keep Dream at bay simultaneously

Carnelian's small useless dagger was lost in the rubble, he had nothing but ability and speed in

dodging George's shots.

George chased him.

"Are you under Blade's control?" George said, following Carnelian as he ran and jumped around the plaza.

"Are you under Blade's control." He mocked back.

"So fucking annoying." George muttered.

"So fucking annoying." Carnelian mocked again.

"Fuck!" He heard Dream shout, and he turned to see him being disarmed by Blade, as the brown villain pressed the top of his sword to Dream's back. Dream put his hands in the air, a trident at his chest and a sword against his back, breathing heavily.

Dream's sword had disappeared, and George saw it had rolled away, closer to him than it was to Dream.

"Dream!" George shouted, turning his bow to point at the Blade.

"Shoot that arrow and Dream gets a sword in the back, GNotFound." Blade said, staring at George.

George's hand was shaking where he was gripping the bow tightly. He didn't lower the bow, just took several breaths as he tried to figure out what to do.

"Great." Blade smiled.

George was knocked to the ground, Carnelian kneeling on him, one hand digging into the cut in his forearm while pinning it behind his back. It made George scream from pain, it hadn't healed yet. Carnelian had his other hand holding a dagger to the side of George's neck.

"Hey Big G." Carnelian said above him.

"If you try to reach my pendent, I will just Shield." George said, voice strained. Carnelian laughed and dug his fingers deeper into George's arm, making him yell.

"I know. That's why we are waiting. Wanna watch Dream get unmasked? I do. Shit, man. I wish I still had that popcorn." He said.

George tried to move, but he was pinned, in pain, and a dagger to his neck. He was relieved his Sapphire was pressing between his chest and the floor. If Carnelian did try to go for it, he'd have time to react and Shield.

But it wasn't worth his power yet.

George could only stare at Dream, who was silent and patient with two weapons pointed at him.

"Now everyone has calmed down." Blade grinned and stepped closer to Dream.

"Project!" Dream shouted, dividing into two, each running a different direction from the weapons.

But the villain in brown swung his sword to the right, and it struck flesh. Dream fell to his knees, his back cut from left to right. George gasped at the sight, seeing the illusion Dream still run away. But it was pointless, they figured out immediately which Dream was real.

The brown villain shoved Dream to the ground completely, one hand in his hair, holding his face up to look at Blade. He had a knee pressing Dream's left hand against his back, and he had his other hand twisting Dream's right hand in the air.

The Emerald glistened in the sunlight.

"No! Dream!" George shouted, as Blade dropped the trident and stepped closer to Dream.

Dream looked at George, and gave him a small smile and a subtle shrug.

"No!" George shouted, as Blade reached for Dream's hand.

"Bolt!"

The ground under all three of them shattered further when the lightning hit it. The brown villain and Blade were both thrown off their feet, landing yards away. Dream was still on the ground, not moving, his hair now spiked in the air from the electricity.

Sapnap took the moment to jump on the brown villain, and grab his hand, yanking off a brown ring with a battle cry.

The brown villain detransformed but George couldn't see from where he was, there was too much dust and rubble between them. Sapnap's jaw dropped, and he quickly picked the civilian up.

"Fuck." He said as he held the boy. George stared at the face he could now see. The boy had brown hair, which was spiked in the air as well, but his sunglasses had been removed and his face was clear.

It was Wilbur.

"Sapnap." George called, and the hero looked over at him. "Take him away. Go. Recharge." He ordered.

Sapnap looked down at the boy in his arms in shock again, before glancing over at Dream, and then looking at George again.

"Go!" George shouted.

Sapnap listened.

Carnelian, who was still holding George, had faltered for several seconds as he stared at the detransformed boy, and George took his chance.

He flipped over, getting nicked in his neck by the dagger slightly in the process, but he pinned Carnelian to the floor.

Although his mouth couldn't be seen by the green material, the Carnelian's eyes were painfully striking. Bright blue, and staring at George. They were wide, with anger, and fear for once. And George hesitated.

The familiarity of the eyes made him falter.

His hesitating was enough for the villain to shove him off, and roll away, stumbling to his feet. George found his bow and shot an arrow. It finally hit, digging itself into one of the boy's leg, and he fell to one knee.

George summoned an arrow before running at the Carnelian and shoving him to the floor once again. The boy landed on his back, but his eyes were scrunched up in pain this time, and George held the arrow to his throat.

"It's over. It's fucking over, Blade!" George said, grinning at the boy.

"G."

He looked up, and his smile immediately fell.

Dream was on his back, the Blade standing above him with the trident pressing against his stomach. But Dream was only staring at George.

George immediately dragged Carnelian up, standing behind him, with one hand holding the boy's head to the side, the other pressing the arrow against his neck.

Blade's mouth twitched into a smile, and George just stared back, breathing rapid.

"G, *finish it*." Dream whispered. He shouldn't have been able to hear it from how far away he was, but Dream had switched on his ear piece.

"Well." Blade said, voice booming and monotone. He grinned at George, and pushed the trident harder against Dream stomach, who was trying to hide his wince.

"It's clear what we do here." George said, feigning confidence as he shook Carnelian's head by his hair. "You let Dream go, I'll let this kid go."

"Why would I do that? You wouldn't kill him." Blade scoffed.

George pressed the arrow harder and it broke the skin. Carnelian whimpered, and blood began to trickle down his neck.

The Blade was usually so composed, so calculated.  
But George saw the twitch of an eye.

"I'm just about willing to do anything at this point." George breathed, eyes falling back to Dream.

"I don't think you realise what's going on here. I have Dream. All I have to do is stab him and he will most certainly die, and I get his jewel. The worst you'll do, which I still highly doubt, is kill him, or take the Carnelian. But what use is that for you? I would have killed your partner, your friend, and you would be alone. Me verse you. No Dream, no Sapnap. You wouldn't stand a chance. Especially when I'll just manipulate someone to wear the Emerald and fight for me." Blade said.

George swallowed. He didn't know what to do. He was stuck. He was alone. He had too much responsibility.

He needed a plan.  
He didn't have time for a plan.  
He was never the one to just follow his instincts.  
He needed Dream.

Dream's Emerald ring flashed twice in the light. And everyone saw it.

"But you'll lose everyone you've manipulated. I take the Carnelian and everyone you've

manipulated is free. You'll have nothing and Doomsday will end. You'll have to detransform." George said, eyes back to the Blade.

"Will it?" Blade smirked. "How much research have you done on the Carnelian?"

"I know what it does. I know how it works." George said through gritted teeth, eyes glancing at the pendent briefly.

"Clearly not enough research." Blade started laughing. "But go on. Take the jewel. I don't care."

George blinked.

"But if you take it, I'll kill Dream."

"And I'll kill the kid." George pressed the arrow further.

"What makes you think I care?"

"Maybe because you *do*. I don't know who this kid is, or who you are but I know love when I see it." George said, eyebrows raising. "You actually care for something. I never thought I'd see the day."

"I don't care." Blade said through his teeth.

"Sure." George dragged the arrow down Carnelian's neck, along his shoulder, leaving a bleeding trail and a whimpering boy.

Blade dug his trident against Dream and the green hero gasped.

That made George stop.  
He was being too reckless.

Two lives were at stake and he didn't want to lose either of them. Even if one was a villain in his hold.

"*G. Take the jewel. Just end it.*" Dream whispered, clear as day in his ear.

"You let him go, and I won't kill Dream." Blade said finally.

"What's the fine print?" George narrowed his eyes.

"I take the Emerald. But Dream gets to live."

"*G, you can't let him get my ring.*"

"Well then I get to take the Carnelian." George said, raising his chin.

Blade's mouth quirked into a smile.

"Alright. You take the Carnelian, throw the kid to the side. I take Dream's ring and won't kill him." Blade said, smirk making George's stomach turn.

"How can I trust you?"

Blade shrugged.

"Guess you can't. But decide quickly."

He pressed deeper into Dream's stomach, and the boy groaned. George could see blood now.

"Ok! Ok. You can take his Emerald if you spare him. I'll take the Carnelian and spare him. Fair?" George said.

The Blade smirked, thinking it over in his head.

"I swear on the blood gods."

"The what?"

"What will you swear on." Blade said, dismissing the question.

George looked at Dream. The boy was staring at him, tears in his bright eyes. The eyes barely visible through the mask but George always saw them clearly. He always had.

"Love." He whispered.

"That's fucking cringey." Carnelian said, and George scowled and dropped his arrow, grabbing the pendent with his hand, and ripping it over the boy's head.

The detransformation was instant, and the boy fell to the floor the second the jewel was stolen. His green material covering his face vanished, along with his red and white suit.

What was replaced was a boring blue shirt and jeans, sneakers, but he still had mop of wild blonde hair.

George paled instantly when he saw the face. He felt sick.

*Tommy* was lying on the floor, bleeding, bruised, and unconscious.

Tommy had the Carnelian. George hurt Tommy, threatened his life. He got his jewel from the Blade. George held up the pendent. A small blank necklace.

No indent for a gem.

There was a laugh behind him, and George turned around, holding the pendent weakly in his hand, as he looked back at the Blade.

The man in the pig mask just grinned, shooting George a wink.

"Blood for the blood gods."

He plunged the trident into Dream's stomach.

## Chapter End Notes

We finally made it to Doomsday.  
Part 1, at least.

Ok Jesus christ that was 9.4k words and I swear I wasn't planning on a cliffhanger but it was way too long of a Doomsday to have one chapter and I like to end things when I think it will cause the most pain heh.

Although, this is actually out of character for me (not the cliffhanger, that is completely something I do often) but the fact that what happens at the *start* of next chapter is what I would usually do at the *end* of a chapter. So get keen for that, that's how you know it'll be an intense chapter.

This was really long and intense and I feel like I missed some things so HOPEFULLY there's no little plot holes but if there is anything sus let me know, there's a lot to keep track of in my head.

Thanks for reading. Your patience with this story will eventually be rewarded

Also I completely forgot to add in a red alert last chapter so that's in there now lol

~

I had one of those moments where I woke up from my dream with a gasp and in cold sweat due to a moment of realisation for chapters ago when George drives Lexi to swimming. I completely forgot americans on their permits can't drive children, even though earlier in this story it literally mentions it. I can't be bothered to change it so everyone just *~go with the flow~* you saw no plot hole anywhere (tbh it's a tiny plot hole and I got confused because I live in australia and I can drive whoever I want on my Ps)

anywaaaaays



# Doomsday Part Two

## Chapter Summary

Doomsday must come to an end... one way or another.

## Chapter Notes

TW// broken bones, blood, gore

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

He plunged the trident into Dream's stomach.

"No!" George screamed in horror.

But Dream didn't scream. He just stared at the prongs of the trident in his stomach. He coughed once.

George had never felt so much rage in his life. It swept through his veins and took control of his body and shut off his mind.

He saw red.

Well, he didn't actually. Perhaps a more accurate metaphor could be that he saw brown. It's a shame, that George would never know the colour red. He'll never see the true beauty in roses, the innocence of a blush or the brightness of blood.

He sprinted forward, picking up the abandoned pen on the ground, and clicked the end of it. It transformed into the sword, Dream's sword, and he charged at Blade, tears in his eyes, fury in his veins and adrenaline in his body.

He swung, and the Blade barely dodged in time, only just barely pulling his trident with him.

George fell to Dream's side, putting one hand against Dream's jaw and neck, and the other on his stomach, pressing against the blood.

"Heal. Heal." George pleaded, eyes filling with tears.

"Hi." Dream said, his hand going over the top of George's.

"You're fine. You'll heal." George choked back a sob, scooping Dream up and holding him to his chest, backing away.

"I'm fine." Dream whispered with a smile.

There was a laugh in the distance, and George looked up. He realised in horror that Blade had picked up Tommy.

"Oh, GNotFound. One thing you should know about the Carnelian." Blade called out.

He smirked.

"The only way to end the Carnelian's powers is either for him to detransform himself, by killing him, or by me ending my manipulation." He laughed. "Everyone is still under my control!"

George shook his head.

No.

There's no way.

It was supposed to end when George took off the Carnelian's pendent. But nothing happened. It did nothing.

Blade smirked and turned around, running away with civilian Tommy in his hold. George didn't have time to worry about the boy.

He couldn't breathe.

He couldn't breathe or think or see.

He turned his attention back down to Dream in his arms, looking at the increasing pool of blood in his abdomen and letting out a sob.

"Fucking heal." George said, as he started running out of the city centre. "Heal. Heal. Please fucking heal, Dream."

"G, it's ok." Dream reached up to touch his cheek.

"No!" George sobbed, reaching an alleyway and lying Dream back on the floor. He put both his hands on Dream's stomach, trying to put pressure on the wounds.

"Guys. Guys, what's going on?" Sapnap's voice was in their ears. Dream still had his earpiece switched so everything he heard and said would go through. *"Did the Blade just say taking the Carnelian wouldn't end his manipulation?"*

"I'm ok." Dream said, reaching up to his ear and switching his earpiece off completely.

"You're not!" George turned to look at Dream's face. His Emerald ring began to rapidly flash and George let out another sob. "You're going to transform back. You're bleeding too much. And you won't heal because you sustained the injuries while transformed."

*"Dream? GNotFound? I can't hear you anymore, what's going on."* Sapnap said into George's earpiece. George switched it off too, he needed to focus on Dream.

"G-"

"Don't tell me it's ok because it not ok and I don't know what I'd do if you're not here." George's hands were shaky as blood coated them. "Dream you can't leave me, I can't do this alone. I-I can't fight without you. I can't *live* without you. You're part of my entire world and you can't leave me." George kept shaking his head. "You're not fucking dying."

"G..." Dream reached up to touch his cheeks.

"I said I wouldn't let him hurt you." George choked out. "I let you down. I said I wouldn't let him hurt anyone I love. No one I care about." George's face was turned so he was looking into Dream's

eyes.

"G, please-"

"I failed you. I failed you and I failed this city. I didn't fix anything. The only thing I managed to do was get you hurt. I'm sorry. I'm so fucking sorry, Dream. You deserve so much better."

"George."

It was enough to stop his crying for a moment. Stop his breathing entirely, actually. George's eyes went wide and his mouth opened to respond but not a single sound came out.

Dream just smiled and tucked a piece of wild hair behind George's ear.

"Georgie." He said softly, smile as gentle as his tone.

"Y-you..." George had no words.

"You're so special, George." Dream whispered, ring still buzzing and flashing. He had seconds left.

"H-how-" George had no words. Dream's fingers were delicate on George's face, pressing into his cheekbones and tracing around the goggles. He touched his nose and lips, and was just smiling the whole time.

"I've loved you for so long, George. You don't even know." Dream's words were whispers. There was a trace of blood on his lips. "I know you don't love me back, you've never had to. Just you existing near me was enough. I don't know how I got so lucky with you being GNotFound. How lucky I was that the boy I recognised on the roof was you. How lucky I am that I fell for my best friend, and my partner."

George just stared at the boy beneath him, smiley mask chipped and stained, bright eyes full of tears.

"I've loved you more than I ever realised."

The flashing stopped, and a soft green glow absorbed Dream for a moment, taking away the costume and mask, taking away his secret. What remained was a heartbroken boy, a dying one.

He had the same bright eyes, the ones that sparkled in the sun and reflected the moonlight, the ones with glistening tears in them. He had freckles on his cheeks, more than was noticeable while wearing the mask. His hair was darker, tamer, softer. His face had more emotion than the permanent smiley could ever convey.

George could only stare, his brain still processing the boy beneath him. Clay gently grabbed one of George's hands and pulled it to place against his cheek.

"I fell in love with you twice. I thought I was going crazy. I thought I was an awful person. I thought I was betraying you for falling for you. GNotFound has been my world for so long, but George made it brighter." Clay said, voice soft but clear, only pure love in his words and eyes.

George could only stare, wide eyes and shaky hands.

"There is no other person. It's been you this whole time, and I hate that it took me so long to know. Finding out my heart was in the same place the whole time was the best day of my life. You revealing yourself was something out of my dreams."

Clay coughed, and a little bit of blood spat out. George still hadn't said a word, mouth open slightly in complete shock, processing what it meant. What it had meant the entire time.

*Clay was Dream.*

"I know you love someone else." Clay croaked out, blinking away his own tears, leaning against George's hand. "And that's ok. I've been ok with it for a while. I don't need you to like me back romantically to know-"

George grabbed Clay's face with both his bloodied hands and kissed him like the world was ending.

Because maybe it was.

It was far from perfect, but that's why it was so. There was blood and tears and guilt and love all in the one kiss they shared. A year of love, months of friendship, weeks of confusion and days of heartbreak. One kiss held it all, and it was so perfect. It was so them.

Clay kissed back just as hard, the taste of blood on their tongues, unsteady hands rising to cup George's jaw, the goggles pressing into the bridge of his nose.

Clay pulled away with a cough, and they pressed their foreheads together.

"I've loved you, Clay. For so long." George whispered. "You're the someone else I love. This whole time." He choked.

"What?" Clay whispered, pulling back slightly, eyes wide and hopeful.

"I thought I was betraying you for falling for someone I didn't know the name of." George sobbed. Clay's lip trembled as he processed.

"Me?" Clay whispered.

"I've loved Dream for as long as I've loved Clay."

George then embraced Clay, holding him tightly, even though Clay couldn't hug back.

"I tried so hard not to. I didn't know Dream, I couldn't love Dream. But God, I'd die for you. I'm so in love with you."

"You love me?" Clay whispered, one hand tugging weakly at the blue material.

"More than anything."

Clay smiled, eyes shutting.

"That's all I needed to know."

George clung to Clay for a few seconds longer, before realising the boy had gone limp. He pulled back and saw Clay's eyes were closed, his face deathly pale, and blood on his lips.

"Clay." He said, shaking his shoulder slightly.

Clay didn't respond.

"No." George whispered, squeezing the boy's arms. "No. Dream. You- you can't."

He leaned forward, ear to Clay's face. He was still breathing, and George sobbed in relief. He quickly pulled away and picked the boy up, holding him tight to his body, one hand cradling his head to his chest, protecting him like he did at the ceremony.

And George ran.

"Please hold on, Clay. I've got you." George whispered through his sobs, looking down at the peaceful boy in his arms, too pale and quiet, a shell of the confident and impulsive boy he knew all too well.

"I've got you, Dream."

•

George slammed through the door, falling to his knees the second he entered the store. He sobbed and could only stare at the motionless boy in his lap.

He heard running and a door opening and suddenly Phil was by his side.

"Out the back. Now." Phil ordered, but George couldn't move. He was just staring at the unconscious boy. Clay's beautiful face, seeing the flash of a white mask for a moment. "George, get up!" He pulled on his arm, and George stood, still holding Clay close to his chest.

He ran out to the back room with Phil, who already had a cleared table. Nick was on the couch, but he stood up when George entered, paling the second he saw Clay.

"GNotFound, what happened." Nick said, running to his side.

"On the table." Phil said, rushing to some cabinets.

George put Clay on the table, but didn't let go of his hands. His head fell against Clay's chest, and he sobbed.

Phil tried to push him back, but George didn't budge.

"Move and I'll treat him!" Phil yelled, and George finally stepped back, still holding one of Clay's hands.

"Is he dead." Nick whispered, eyes tearing up at the sight of Clay. Blood still trickling out of his soaked stomach, and traces of red on his lips.

"He's breathing." Phil said, pulling out a needle.

"He's detransformed. He won't heal. Blade..." George heaved. "Blade stabbed him."

"I can keep him stable." Phil said calmly.

"You can't!" George screamed.

Phil looked up at George, seeing how much the boy was panicking, how on the verge of passing out he was.

"Detransform. Now."

"No. No, I can't. I-I got the Carnelian but it was useless. Everyone is still manipulated, taking the gem d-did nothing. It was all for nothing." He sobbed. "Clay's dead for nothing. I killed *Dream*. I

gambled on his life and I k-killed him."

George couldn't breathe. The world was spinning, and all he could see was Clay's pasty skin and piercing blood.

"Detransform. Sit down." Phil yelled, stabbing Clay in the forearm with the needle. George's eyes widened at it.

"What are you doing!" He said, as Phil attached a tube to the needle.

"Giving him blood. You need to calm down. Detransform. Nick, get him water." Phil said.

"Shouldn't I leave? I don't know his identity." Nick said, looking at the hero before looking back at one of his best friends bleeding out on the table.

"Make him sit down." Phil said, grabbing cloths and bandages and pressing against Clay's stomach.

George felt Nick grab his arm, but he didn't move, still squeezing Clay's hand.

"No. No. I-I can't leave him. I k-killed him." George sobbed, breaths short and rapid. He was getting dizzy.

"DETRANSFORM. NOW." Phil yelled, and George froze, holding his breath for a second.

He nodded and closed his eyes.

"Mask off." He sobbed.

He opened his eyes again and held Clay's hand tighter, bringing it up to press a shaky kiss to the back of his hand.

"G-George?"

A whisper behind his shoulder, and George couldn't bare to turn around.

"Nick, I killed him." George whispered, squeezing his eyes shut, holding Clay's hand to his forehead. "I killed Clay. I killed your best friend. I'm so sorry."

Arms wrapped tightly around him, pulling George against a warm chest and he turned to bury his face against Nick. He felt a comforting hand in his hair, as Nick held him.

"You didn't, George." Nick whispered back, swallowing the lump in his throat. "You saved him."

"He's dead."

"Not on my watch. Go sit down." Phil said, and Nick tried to pull George away, but the brunette didn't budge, still holding tight into Clay's hand.

"I can't leave him. I won't."

"GEORGE. Step away so I can treat Clay." Phil yelled.

George tensed his jaw and looked up to glare at Phil.

"You gave him his Emerald." He said through his teeth. "You're the reason Clay is hurt."

"George, just sit down." Nick said, staring at his best friend's face, still processing the fact that his

two best friends were the superheroes he's known and adored for over a year.

GNotFound has saved him before, multiple times. George hardly hung out with his friends, had horrible sleep and was behind in class work. Nick thought that was why he would fall apart as a hero, but it was actually *because* he was a hero.

That's why GNotFound took his Diamond. George wanted to protect him. Like he always has, in his own quiet way.

"Why did you do this to him, Phil." George cried. "Why Clay."

He fell to his knees with a wheeze, hand slipping out of Clay's unintentionally. Nick immediately picked him back up, and tried pulling him away from the table, but George desperately tried to grab Clay's limp hand again.

"Let me be with him." George begged, pushing Nick away to grab Clay's. Nick let him, giving Phil a look, before just sighing and putting an arm around George, who let his head fall against Nick's shoulder. "Nick, I-I killed Clay." George said again, through panicked breaths.

"No, George."

"I'm so sorry." George looked up at Nick. "I'm so fucking sorry. I've lied to you for so long, I've been a horrible friend and I've let you down so much. I'm sorry for taking your Diamond, I just didn't want you to deal with what I have. I didn't want you near the fight. I couldn't bare the thought of one of my best friends getting hurt."

Nick wanted to cry, so he just held George tighter.

George looked back down at Clay.

"I failed."

"Not yet, you haven't." Phil chimed in, still trying to get Clay stable. "Where is Blade? What happened."

"Blade h-held Dream. I held Carnelian..." George drifted off, recalling the way Tommy had fallen to the floor, and George closed his eyes.

"Where's Wilbur?" George whispered.

"He's fine, he's locked in a room, still manipulated. Your sister and Drista are downstairs. Don't worry, they can't hear a thing." Phil said.

George looked up at the man.

"I took Carnelian's jewel." He shakily lifted up the small pendent, but Phil was busy trying to stop Clay's bleeding to look at it. "And it did nothing."

"So everyone is still manipulated?" Nick said, eyes wide in horror.

"Not until Blade takes off his Ruby."

"I didn't know that's how the jewel works. Can he still manipulate more people?" Phil said, knitted eyebrows, as he put a small ventilator over Clay's mouth and nose to help him breathe.

"I don't know." George whispered.

"Where'd you get the medical shit?" Nick asked Phil.

"I had a bad feeling about today." Phil said simply. "He's as stable as I can get him." He added, bending down to hear Clay's breathing.

George just stared numbly at the lifeless boy on the table. The only thing keeping him sane was the shallow rising and falling of Clay's chest.

He looked down at the ring on Clay's right hand. Plain with no gem. He still couldn't wrap his head around it.

"Blade took him." George whispered, looking back at Phil.

"Took who? The Carnelian?" Nick said, furrowed eyebrows.

"Who was it? Were they manipulated?" Phil said, now looking at George.

George took a deep breath and bit his lip.

"It was Tommy." George said, looking back at the pendent. Even though no one was wearing it, it was still blank with no sign of a gem. A memory came back to George's mind.

*"Isn't it epic!" Tommy said with a grin, fiddling with the necklace.*

"What?" Phil said, frozen, his voice coming out in a horrified whisper. George nodded and held up the necklace higher so Phil could see it.

"How did he get it?" Nick said.

Phil went pale.

"I've seen that before." Phil swallowed.

*Tommy pulled out a necklace. It was plain, just a simple small circle resting against his chest, nothing in its centre.*

*"I should keep it on all the time because it has good energy. And something about it bringing me courage and confidence. And some dumb fancy word I couldn't say... vi-vita- i don't know." Tommy said.*

"Vitality." George mumbled to himself.

"But there's... there's no way because..." Phil stood up straight, still staring at the necklace. George looked up and met his eyes.

"His brother gave it to him." George finished his sentence.



*"My older brother Techno is in town, and he got me a really cool gift!" Tommy said, standing up as George and Clay sat down.*

*"Why would he get you a gift?" Quackity asked.*

*"Because he's been gone for like 5 years. Travelling."*

"No." Phil shook his head, looking just as sick as George felt.

"Wilbur was manipulated too." Nick said slowly, also looking at Phil. The man took a step back, eyes wide and face pale.

"It's Techno. Blade is Techno." George said, holding onto Clay's hand tighter.

"It... it can't be." Phil whispered.

"It is." George stood up. "He manipulated his brothers. This whole time..." He recalled meeting Techno, how it felt like the older man knew him. He knew him because George Davidson was his target.

"How do we defeat him?" Nick said.

"It can't be." Phil whispered to himself. "That necklace has no gem, whether he was wearing it or not."

"We already knew the Carnelian works different to other gems. Maybe it doesn't show a jewel at all unless activated." Nick said, staring at the pendant. "What are we going to do?"

"I don't know. The city is still destroying itself, people are still hurting and dying and fighting. There are still a few villains left, causing havoc everywhere else. Dream is..." George choked up again when he looked at Clay. "Sapnap can't transform." He gestured to Nick.

"I can soon."

"We can't keep wasting time! Doomsday has been going on for two hours. I haven't seen or heard from my family in so long. People are separated and hurting and we need the hospitals to open." George clutched the Carnelian tighter.

A loud ding echoed around the room, making all three of them jump. It came from their phones, and while Nick and Phil scrambled to grab theirs, George just closed his eyes and gripped Clay's limp hand tighter.

"I don't want to know." He whispered.

"Shit." Nick said.

"Blade sent an alert. George." Phil held out his phone so George could see it. George reluctantly opened his eyes and took a shaky breath.

**CODE RED**

**Dream is dead. Everyone else in this city will perish along with your beloved hero unless I have all three jewels. Time's running out, GNotFound**

**- The Blade**

"He's not dead!" George yelled, throwing Phil's phone behind him onto the sofa. "He's not." He put a hand over Clay's heart. The beat was weak and steady.

"How are we supposed to defeat him?" Nick asked.

George gritted his teeth, hand clenching the Carnelian.

He let go of Clay's hand and took a step backwards, still staring at the boy. Nick looked at him.

"George?" He asked, which made Phil look over too after retrieving his phone.

"I'm going to end this." He said, still looking at the unconscious boy on the table. "I'm getting that Ruby."

"George... just wait for Nick to recharge. And for Dream to heal. You can't do it yourself." Phil said, watching George's movements carefully. "Let's plan first, there's no need to go rushing into danger. Let's not be impulsive."

George looked down at the pendent in his hand, and then back at Clay, glancing at the ring on his finger.

"Maybe impulsive is exactly what I need to be." George whispered.

He looked back at Phil, who glanced down to see him gripping the pendent, and his eyes widened.

"George, don't. You know what happened to me-"

George ran out of the room without looking back, pocketing the Carnelian as he did. He ran out into the street and turned left, weaving around cars and broken poles and shattered glass.

The city had grown quiet over the past few hours. He hoped everyone was just hiding now.

"Mask on." He said, activating the Sapphire once again, and his running became faster. He leaped over barriers now with ease, and he felt his previous stinging arm return to healing itself.

He tried to force the thoughts of Clay to the back of his mind. He couldn't afford to get emotional again, he had a job to do.

It took so much in him not to break down. Everyone was relying on him. *Clay* was relying on him. He was pretty much dead and George had nothing good to show for his sacrifice.

The city was in ruins. This place he grew up in, and swore to protect was in shambles. As he made his way through the streets, he saw how much damage Blade had caused, how much was still being caused. There were still manipulated people destroying what they could. Apparently there were still villains, somewhere around the city.

It had calmed down somewhat, probably due to Blade easing them off. He probably wanted George to focus less on saving everyone and just give up. It was hard to give up his Sapphire if he was busy saving every civilian. At the start it was fun and chaotic, but now it was just messy and ruined.

Blade had his fun.

Now he wanted his reward.

When George reached the city centre once more, he took a deep breath and walked to the middle of it, looking around.

"Blade!" He screamed.

There was no response. Nothing.

He knows Blade would come back here. It was the heart of the city, where major fights have occurred. And Blade knew that George would return as well.

"Show yourself you fucking coward!" George screamed, shorting an arrow through the plaza, where it hit a window and shattered it.

Still nothing. George growled and kicked some rubble along the ground.

"Techno! Show your fucking face!"

It was silent for another moment, and George was about to give up, go looking for the Blade himself.

There was a crunch behind him and George spun around. The Blade was a few yards away, holding his trident in his hand, teeth gritted.

"What did you call me?" He asked.

George tried to control his breathing, and held the bow tighter to hide his shaking.

"Techno."

The villain threw his trident, and George dove out of the way, it barely missing him. He gasped and stood back up, shooting a few arrows.

"I know who you are. Where did you take Tommy?" George asked, jogging backwards and the Blade approached the trident sticking out of the ground.

"You know him." Blade commented dryly, flicking his weapon in his hands.

"He's just a kid. He's your brother. Why is he on your side? Did you use your power? Or manipulate him the old fashioned way." George said, still backing up.

"You think that freshman would have helped me destroy the city and his beloved heroes intentionally?" Blade scoffed.

"He's a sophomore. Maybe if you actually cared about your brother, you would know that." George said coolly.

"And why do you know that?" Blade hummed, following George as he walked backwards around the plaza. George shot an arrow and Blade lazily dodged it. "How do you know Tommy? What makes you think you know who I am?"

"I know who you are, Techno. You don't need to lie. You may not know me but I sure as hell know you." George said. Blade bared his teeth, and his speed increased as he approached George.

"Why don't you tell me who you are, hm?" Blade said, tilting his head to the side. "GNotFound is a mouthful to say, I'm sure you have an easier name."

"I've made it this long without slipping up, I guess you'll never know." George huffed.

"I've gotten very close. Do you know how lucky that George kid is? Escaped my attempt every

time." Blade said, and then laugh. "You are friends with George. George is friends with Tommy. I can see how you know him. I never would have thought some kid from Pandora High would be the infamous GNotFound. But here we are."

"And I never would have guessed Tommy's older brother would be a supervillain." George glared at him. "But here we are."

Blade scraped his trident along the ground, and when George sent several more shots his way, he used it to expertly deflect them.

"I've had a lot more experience than you, G. Can I call you that? I know Dream does." Blade grinned.

"Don't call me that."

"Well, I mean... Dream *did*." Blade laughed. "So? How quick did he die?"

George clenched his teeth, willing himself not to break down as he thought about Clay's lifeless face.

"You probably saw him transform, tried to save him. But he's cold and dead. You took his Emerald, I assume? And Sapnap's Diamond? That's why you showed here right? Finally come to your senses."

"Dream isn't dead." George said, voice breaking.

"You don't even sound convinced yourself." Blade laughed. "So come on, GNotFound. Who is Dream? Who are you? Who is Liberator? Who is Sapnap? I'm sure you have the answers, secrets can only be contained for so long." Blade smiled a pearly white smile.

George gritted his teeth and didn't respond.

"Sorry, let me correct myself." Blade shrugged. "Who *was* Dream?"

George sprinted forward, firing arrow after arrow at the Blade giving no breaks. The villain stepped backwards, deflecting each one with his trident, or dodging with ease.

"He's not dead!" George said, on the verge of crying. "He won't die."

"It still seems like you're trying to convince yourself that, GNotFound." Blade said. He then tucked his trident under his arm that had no hand, and he clicked his fingers with a smile. George narrowed his eyes and stopped to stare at him for a second.

"What was that?"

"Just calling a few friends." Blade shrugged.

A shadow fell upon them, and George immediately ran backwards, as a large boulder fell from the sky where he was moments ago.

He looked up and saw the pink villain from the very start of doomsday standing on the top of a building that collapsed in on itself, smiling and waving at George.

A searing pain came upon his thigh after what sounded like a water gun fired at him. George screamed and dropped to his knee, looking down at a dark substance sizzling against his thigh, burning through his costume into his skin.

He looked back up, and quickly dove out of the way of another spray of the substance coming straight for his face. He looked across the plaza and saw a villain in dark green, with a gun pointed right at him.

The ground started rumbling right where he was, and he jumped to his feet, limping on his stinging thigh, and moving far out of the way. The already torn up area he was standing on was now jolting even more, and the small earthquake followed him as he ran backwards.

The villain standing behind the Blade was the one that controlled the massive earthquake from earlier, who was now making them concentrated on George.

"Come on, GNotFound. Aren't you tired of these games? Fighting villain after villain for over a year. It can all end, you know. All this suffering can end." The Blade stepped closer to GNotFound, a hand in the air stopping all the villains from attacking for a moment.

George stood there, bow limp in his hand, thigh feeling like it was on fire and panting like he had run a mile.

"I know you must be exhausted. Liberator put you in an awful position. You've had to sacrifice so much. Your social life, your schoolwork, your family, your friends. Your sleep, your freedom." Blade chuckled slightly. "God, it must have been awful. And you couldn't tell anyone, not even your family, or friends. Not even Dream. You had to keep this secret and the weight of your city on your shoulders for so long, with no one to help you." George almost mistook his patronising tone as sympathy.

The truth was, Blade was right. George did sacrifice all of that.

"And you had no choice, I'm sure. It was cruel of Liberator to do that to you. Why would he choose a teenager of all people in this city. Seems to me like he wanted to see you fail."

George glared daggers at Blade, jaw as tense as stone.

"It can all end, GNotFound. Just give me your pendent, the ring and the bracelet, and it will all be over. You can go back to your life, you can have your freedom back." Blade said, pacing.

George swallowed, and shook his head.

"I don't think I'll ever be free until you're gone for good. I've sacrificed a lot, but I will finally be able to say it was worth it." He drew his bow and lined up a shot, closing one eye. "I'm not stopping until I have your Ruby in my hand."

He shot the arrow, and Blade deflected it, his previous taunting smile now setting into a furious scowl.

His raised his trident in the air, the tip of the glistening gold reflecting in the sunlight. The dark mantle draped across his shoulders swayed slightly in the wind, and his eyes behind the mask stared only at George, with fury and power.

The Ruby was the jewel of passion.

And the way the bright earring caught the light of the sky, George had no doubt Techno's veins were running with power.

George faced him, arm still bleeding, thigh burning and heart racing. His bow was tight in his grip, and he stared back at the Blade with the same amount of fury through his opaque goggles. His pendent rested against his chest, sparkling a mocking blue at Blade.

The Sapphire was the jewel of protection.

And George made a vow a long time ago that he would sacrifice everything for this city, for the people he loves, and for Dream.

The second the trident dropped, the ground began to rumble again, and George charged forward, shooting arrow after arrow at the monster across from him.

A boulder landed between him and the Blade, taller than the both of them, and George skidded to a stop. He barely ducked in time from the acid firing from the dark green villain, and he quickly ran to the side of the rock, away from his view.

"If I have to kill you for the Sapphire, I will do it, GNotFound. You know I would do it." The Blade's voice came from a little further away, and when George looked around the rock, he saw the man was backing away with a smile.

He was going to let his villains get the best of George so he didn't have to do anything.

George dove out of the way just as a second rock landed right where he was, and he turned around to look at the pink villain. She was already starting to create another rock.

George's feet were unstable on the rumbling and torn up ground, but he took a chance and ran towards the building the pink villain was on. It was mostly ruins, but she had a high vantage point.

He shot multiple arrows at her, but she just hid behind her ever-growing rock.

He jumped onto the rubble, but screamed and fell to his knees when he was shot by the acid on his shoulder blade. The searing heat and pain made him gasp and hiss.

He barely rolled out of the way of the boulder the pink villain then threw at him. She laughed, watching as he groaned on the ground.

"This is too much fun." She cackled, using her hands to form another rock.

George realised this was his only chance, so he fought the pain and jumped to his feet. He shot an arrow at her, which she just dodged, but then he sprinted at her, diving and knocking her over, the rock rolling away, down the pile of rubble.

Before she could even say anything, he grabbed her pink pendant and tore it off.

The second he did, he rolled away behind a large chunk of building as more acid was shot at him, gasping for air and wincing at the searing pain in his back. His thigh had stopped hurting, and was now just a light stinging as it healed.

The earthquake spiked, and the ground shook with so much force that George couldn't even stand up if he tried to.

There was a loud groaning and cracking that echoed through the entire city center, and a shadow shifted across George.

He looked up to see a neighbouring building begin to crumble and lean towards him. He scrambled to his feet, and jumped off the mound of rubble he was on, but the earthquake was so strong he missed his landing and tripped onto his stomach.

The building fell and his ankle made a horrifying crack when a large chunk of building landed on his leg. He let out a scream, and a choked cough, as dust from the collision filtered through the air.

At least he had a moment where no one could see him. He used it to drag his foot out of the wreckage, a limp mess. Every breath out was a suppressed scream, and he gritted his teeth, willing it to heal enough so he could walk.

He got himself up onto one leg, and dragged his broken foot along as he ran around the back of the fallen building. The dust was beginning to settle, and he needed the advantage.

"GNotFound." Blade called out, monotone voice travelling far. George pressed his back against a large rock, trying to catch his breath and take pressure off his broken foot for a few moments. "I know you're not dead, come out."

He wanted Dream. No, he *needed* Dream.

He heard a yell, a battle cry of sorts, and his eyes widened.

That was Sapnap.

"Get back here you slimy bastard!" He heard Nick's shout, and George, as quick as he could, hopped around the corner.

Just in time to see Nick tear out an earring from the dark green villain shooting acid from their gun.

Blade growled in anger, and the earthquake got more powerful in response. Sapnap stumbled, but started running towards the Blade.

George quickly ran out too, his foot still shattered but maybe it was his superpowers or his adrenaline that was letting him put a small amount of weight on it. He was limping as he ran back into the open area.

"Sap, how are you here?" George shouted.

"It's been half an hour, I recharged." The boy yelled back as he ran at the Blade, swinging his axe.

"So you *didn't* have the Diamond, GNotFound. You better hope one of you has my Emerald." The Blade said, as Sapnap swung his axe at him, meeting it with his trident.

"It's *Dream's* Emerald." Sapnap shouted, trying to push against the Blade's trident with his axe, but they were both equally strong.

"He won't have much use for it when he dies." Blade said with a laugh.

George shot a dozen arrows one after the other at Blade, who pulled away from Sapnap for the moment to deflect them.

Sapnap, instead of going at Blade, ran behind him towards the earthquake villain, and threw his axe at him.

The villain dodged, luckily, but George had run over too and tackled him to the ground.

In one last effort to fight back, a massive crack was heard breath George and the villain, nearly knocking George off, but he reached for his hand and grabbed the ring, yanking it off.

The ground finally went still as he did, and George sighed in relief, rolling off the still manipulated civilian.

"No!" Blade shouted, at the same time Sapnap cheered.

"We are so cracked, Geo- GNotFound! Holy shit, we are an epic team." Nick said, and George couldn't help but smile as he recovered on the floor.

There was a crack and a thud, and George immediately sat up to see Sapnap pinned to the ground, gasping in pain and clutching his wrist which was being pinned by the heavy hilt of Blade's gold trident.

"Sapnap!" George stood up, but was suddenly stopped by what seemed like nothing. He tried to run forward, but it was like he was hitting a brick wall.

He punched in front of him, and hissed as his hand met something solid. A laugh came from above, and he looked up to see a glistening villain flying in the sky. It was the same one from that day at the school, that used barriers to trap the students inside.

George looked back through the transparent barrier, which he realised at the right angle was actually slightly glittery.

The Blade looked up at George, smirking. He was standing above Sapnap, a foot holding the long handle part of the trident to the floor, which was digging into Sapnap's right wrist and along his neck, making the hero choke.

George tried to push through the barrier again, moving left and right, but he was trapped. He was trapped and helpless, and Sapnap was out of reach.

Sapnap was on the floor, vulnerable, with a supervillain standing above him. Nick was in peril, like George had always feared, and despite his best efforts to keep him from harm, he was now powerless to protect him.

George shook his head, eyes wide as he stared at Blade. A silent plead.

The Blade just laughed, and reached down with his right hand, touching Sapnap's shoulder while keeping eye contact with George.

"Manipulate." He said.

Although that was possibly one of the worst scenarios, George couldn't help but sigh in relief. Blade had stabbed Dream, attempted to kill him. But he kept Sapnap unharmed.

Relatively.

George kept trying to punch through the barrier. He shot an arrow up in the air, but the silver villain wasn't within his barriers, and it just fell back to the ground beside him.

"Let him go!" George shouted, banging on the wall.

Blade shrugged, and stepped off his trident, picking it up and letting Sapnap sit up on his knees. The hero looked dazed, eyes slightly clouded over.

"Sapnap!" George shouted.

"Tell me what your name is." The Blade asked, and George's stomach dropped.

Sapnap knew who *everyone* was.

"Nick Armstrong." Nick said, staring into the distance. Blade grinned the biggest smile George had ever seen.



"Tell me if you know Dream and GNotFound's identities." Blade asked, excitement clear on his face.

"I do."

The Blade laughed, low and evil and with pure delight.

"Oh, this is too easy." Blade looked over at George, who had also fallen to his knees, still banging on the barrier.

"Sapnap! Sap, please stop." George begged.

"You can call him Nick, GNotFound. It's alright." The Blade laughed, watching George. "But you clearly already knew that. Maybe you heroes aren't as good at keeping secrets as I thought."

"Nick." George yelled. But it was hopeless. The boy didn't even look in his direction.

"Tell me what Dream's real name was." Blade said, kicking Nick in his side for no reason other than to torture George.

"Clay Block." Nick said.

George closed his eyes.

"Clay... *Block*." The Blade's eyes twinkled at the news. "You're telling me the *Mayor's son* is the one and only *Dream*." He howled with laughter. "I assumed that with a prick for a father, he wouldn't have a good bone in his body. Kudos to him for trying to play superheroes and save the world." The Blade was using his trident to keep himself upright from laughing.

George was shaking, trying to calm down.

This was just a nightmare. Just one of his nightmares. The Blade finds out everything and they lose. It's a nightmare, *just a nightmare*.

"And, *Nick*, would you be so kind as to tell me the name of that boy." The Blade said, voice way to cheery for a villain. George looked up, swallowing, heart beating in his ears as he waited for Nick to speak.

"George Davidson."

And that wiped the smile off Blade's face.

George just stared, not saying a word, not making a single movement. Just stared at Techno and hoped somehow he could see the pure hatred in his glare through the goggles.

"Say it again." Blade ordered Sapnap.

"George Davidson."

"George. Davidson." The Blade stepped towards George. He scoffed. "You are one clever little kid aren't you, *George*." Blade said.

George said nothing, as he looked up at Blade through the barrier.

"I never realised how close I really was to GNotFound while hunting George. You had me fooled, I admit. Unlucky, though." Blade laughed, walking back over to Sapnap. "Shame you spent so long hiding. You couldn't live as GNotFound. You couldn't live as George. I'm honestly surprised you haven't just handed me your Sapphire." He gloated.

George's hands turned to fists. He'd had enough of the talking.

"Sapnap, I mean, *Nick*." Blade chuckled. "Tell me who Liberator is."

"Phil Za."

And finally, George was the one smiling. This one small win where Blade's composure was lost. His previous toothy grin had dropped, eyes widening, and he looked down at Nick as if he didn't hear it right.

"Phil." Blade repeated softer. "Phil is the Liberator."

No one said anything for a few moments, and Blade stabbed his trident into Nick's knee. The boy shouted in instinct, but did nothing to move away, and George yelled in horror.

"Stop! Please! Let him be!" George pleaded.

"Tell me where Phil keeps the jewels."

"I don't know." Nick said, and George blinked at that. Phil never told Nick. For all the boy knew, the safe of gems was on the moon.

"Then tell me where his hideout is." Blade said, digging the trident in further.

"At his jewellery store." Nick said in a pained voice.

"Great." Techno withdrew his trident and tucked it under his handless arm, holding out his free hand. "Now give me your Diamond."

"No!" George shouted, standing up again and punching the wall once more.

Nick unclamped his bracelet and detransformed. Now he was just in his regular clothes, that George saw not too long ago. His knee was still bleeding, his wrist was at a weird angle, and his neck was bruised.

It was Nick. Just innocent, powerless, vulnerable Nick.

"Finally." Blade grinned, holding up the Diamond to the light.

"What are they for? Why do you need them?" George said, voice small.

"Have you ever lost someone you loved, George." Blade said, not looking at him. George shuddered at the use of his real name.

"Oh, wait. You have." Blade laughed. "Dream's dead. But now I know where the Mayor's son's body must be. Along with Liberator, and presumably the jewels." Blade said with a cocky smile.

"Dream's not dead." George seethed. "He won't die."

"No? Well, maybe you need to lose someone else. Character development, I'd say." Blade said, pointing the trident at Nick.

"No." George whispered. "I'll give you my Sapphire." He said shakily.

"I know you will." Blade nodded with a smirk.

"But you'll still kill him. Won't you." George said, fighting back a sob as he looked at Nick who was just staring at the ground as if he had accepted his fate.

"You know me too well." Blade grinned, and pressed the tip of trident against Nick's chest.

"No! Stop!" George pulled the Carnelian out of his pocket and put the pendent around his neck.

The action made Blade stop, eyes snapping to the blank jewel resting just above the Sapphire.

"Do you know what that power did to me when I combined it." Blade said, trying to feign indifference, but he was staring at the two jewels like he was nervous.

"Yes." George said, hands shaky.

"G! No!"

A shout that went unheard, as George closed his eyes.

"Mask on."

The power that swept through him was a different feeling to when it was just his Sapphire. The Carnelian was red hot while his own jewel was usually ice cold.

He snapped open his eyes, in time to see Blade's shock on his own face, hand slack on his trident.

"Shield!" He shouted, pushing his hands out in front of him at the same time.

The effect was deafening in the first second, and George was nearly knocked off his feet, but he held his ground, closing his fists and gritting his teeth. The power that surged out of him was bright and blue and full of energy. Too much overwhelming energy.

A blue shockwave surged out of his body, from the two pendants, filling the entire city centre. But it went further than that, it rippled out to coat the entire city in a blue haze of energy.

George could hear his heartbeat like it was being blasted through speakers and echoing through the entire city. He had to squeeze his eyes shut for a moment, trying to contain the power before it knocked him over.

His Shield was huge, and it extended to protect every single person. It was like the entire city was placed in a snow globe and rattled around.

When George opened his eyes, he saw Blade on the ground, trying to get up, but there was so much heavy power pushing against him that he couldn't. Nick was nearby, also lying down, but he was now passed out, and George had to pray he wasn't dead.

"Blade." George turned to the red villain. His voice echoed around him, loud and powerful and clear. He took a step forward.

"Y-you'll kill... yourself." Blade managed to get out, rolling over onto his stomach and trying to crawl away as George slowly approached him. "You're just a kid, and that energy-"

"I'm just a kid." George repeated, stepping on Blade's foot, stopping him from moving away.

His hands were beginning to shake, and his arm spasmed but he ignored it. The energy rushing through his blood was making his body twitch and shiver, but he had never felt this much energy in his life. He felt immune. He felt powerful.

He felt insanely protective of his city.

"G, you have to stop." A voice pleaded from behind. George knew that voice.

"Dream?" He whispered, spinning around.

The boy in green was several feet away, but collapsed onto to his knees, hands clutching his stomach. He was gasping for air and hands were shaking.

"G... you'll kill yourself. Please stop." He said, clearly still severely injured and weak.

"You're ok." George sobbed in relief, and stepped forward to run towards him, but one of his legs gave out beneath him.

"George. You need to stop now. There's too much energy." Clay pleaded, as George got to his feet again.

"I-I have to end this." George turned around, entire body shaking. Blue power kept surging from him in waves.

Blade had managed to get to his knees, but when George saw this, more power repelled away, and Blade was knocked over again.

George walked over and kicked him so the Blade turned onto his back.

"You're a coward, Techno." George said, bending over him, grinning. "Hiding behind villains for a year just to lure us out. Using your little brother to make yourself more powerful, but still managing to lose." George couldn't stop smiling.

The Blade glared up at him, and George reached for his wrist where he had secured the Diamond bracelet, and took it off, pocketing it immediately. It belonged to Nick.

Blade reached out and grabbed George's broken ankle.

"Manipulate!" He said.

But nothing happened.

George cackled, his laugh sounding borderline insane. Delusional, even. He just stood on the wrist that had attempted to manipulate him, and he bent down closer to Blade's face.

"Nice try."

Blade's eyes looked scared. For once, the composed villain had no plan, no upper-hand. And he was scared.

"I've wasted so much of my life on you." George said, reaching out and touching the sparking earring. "So many sleepless nights thinking about when it would happen. When we would *finally* lose the war that I've been fighting in for so long. Because two kids verse an adult supervillain with unlimited villains at his disposal seemed like an impossible win."

He smiled and grabbed the earring, staring into Blade's eyes.

"It's over, Blade."

He tore out the Ruby.

There was something so ordinary about staring in Techno's eyes when he didn't have a boar mask, no mantle and no bright earring. When he was just a civilian, with no trident and no powers.

George slowly walked backwards, away from the civilian, still clutching the earring. But the energy that was continuously surging through him knocked him off his feet and he collapsed onto his knees. His body, which was previously twitching with excess energy and power, now it felt like it had been hit by a truck.

But his Sapphire and the Carnelian were still pushing out the same amount of his power. The blue shield was still coating the city like a blanket, and it felt heavy on his chest.

"George!"

Hands grabbed his shoulders, shaking him slightly. George lifted his heavy head, looking right into Dream's eyes through the mask. Clay's eyes.

"We did it." George mumbled, nearly tipping to his side, but Clay held him upright.

"Stop it! Stop the power. It's still going." Clay begged, gripping George's shoulders.

"It's blue." George whispered, eyes heavy and head lolling to the side. His heart was slowing down now at least.

"George, you're dying! Stop it! Let it go!" Clay said.

"I can't." George whispered.

Clay ripped the Carnelian off over George's head, and pressed his thumb into his cheek.

But nothing happened.

"Why isn't it working?" Clay cried.

His voice was far away in George's ears, the only thing he could hear was the slowing of the loud thumping in his ears, and the distant sound of buzzing in his brain.

"I love you, Clay." George said, eyes shutting as he gave in to the power. As he finally let his Sapphire take over his body, like he had let it done with his life.

But Clay tore off his Sapphire, and caught George as he fell to the side, pulling him as close as he could to his body, holding him tight.

"I've got you." Clay sobbed, clutching the boy.

"I've got you, George."

## Chapter End Notes

We finally made it.

Only 57 chapters later and you guys finally get the reveal and the climax we've been waiting for! This was by far one of the most anticipated chapters and intense I've written holy cow. Multiple reveals, THE reveal, a love profession, a massive fight and

several near-deaths.

And a cliffhanger, of course. You know me.  
(But I promise there is no major time-skip next chapter)

Don't worry, still have a few more chapters to go. I'm not just going to leave you hanging once it gets the best part. Plus, there's still so many unanswered questions. Number 1 being is George even alive lmao.

I'm so proud of my little Georgie, he's come so far since Chapter 1.

Sorry if there are any mistakes again. I have an exam in literally 9 hours and two essays in the next few days so minecraft fanfiction was not my number one priority. But I couldn't miss Super Wednesday, of course. I have a reputation to keep.

Also BIG NEWS

We have a Discord!!!

Organised and created from scratch by the absolutely incredible @/WolfMangos on twitter.

Where you can chat about Super and your thoughts on the chapter and the entire story!

Also where you can make friends and just meet new people.

It's Super themed, with channels and roles to do with this story. For example, my role is Liberator, And there is a channel called Shield, and when you join you are a Civilian and you can level up by chatting :))

<https://t.co/wVghRMQ5ij>

It's really really cool and it's already being used by over 30 people, so come join. You don't even have to chat if you don't want to, just see what people are saying. I'm going to tweet about in soon as well

Hopefully when I release my next story (when Super finishes) it can become a place for that as well.

I appreciate you all so much. Thank you for the constant support and love I received on this story. I hope it was worth the long journey to this, and I hope I wrap up the story in a way that satisfies you.

-Lottie

# We've always been a team

## Chapter Summary

Doomsday was declared over, and hundreds of people are cramping up the hospital.  
Clay just feels lost, and alone, and tired. So, so tired

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay was staring at his hands, seeing the plain ring on his right hand and picturing the green Emerald. Recalling what happened not too long ago.

*"Phil." Clay sobbed, shaking his head. "I-I-I can't do it. The police, I... Dream needs to help the city, there's so many casualties... but I- he-"*

Clay put his hands in his hair, tugging at the roots.

*"Go, Clay. I'll take care of the city. You take care of your friends."*

Clay let out a sob. His head was pounding. His stomach was still killing him. But he wanted nothing more than to just be Clay.

He should be Dream, to heal. He got stabbed in the stomach for God's sake, but he couldn't stand being Dream right now. He didn't want to be anything but Clay. Not when George was only George.

He was currently sitting outside the hospital, leaning against the wall. He wasn't allowed inside, no one was unless you were a severely injured patient.

And there were so many patients. So many people, and they just kept coming.

The city had set up a second location, at the elementary school that was nearby for the more minor injuries and people who were manipulated.

George was in the hospital.

*"No!" Clay screamed, as someone pushed his hand away from George's. He tried to push past them, but security held him at the door. He had to watch as pale and lifeless George was wheeled away. "No! You don't understand. I h-have to be with him. You don't understand."*

*"Mr Block, we assure you he is in good hands-"*

*"You don't understand!"*

Clay buried his head in his knees, trying to soften his crying. No one took notice of him, despite how busy it was outside the hospital. There were sirens everywhere coming from every direction, people trying to get into the hospital, personnel trying to sort out who needed to go where.

He just sat to the side, out of the way.

He had spent hours fighting Doomsday. Villains, manipulated people, the Blade. He had to detransform twice, was stabbed in the stomach and nearly died. He saw his city that he'd spent so much time defending, fall to pieces. He had to see one of his best friends lying on the cold ground unconscious because his Diamond bracelet had been taken. And he had to feel the love of his life's pulse slowly weaken.

He'd put blood sweat and tears into protecting this city. But no one knew that.

Right now he was just Clay, sitting outside the hospital, alone. Because his phone had died hours ago, and his two best friends were in urgent care. And no one knew he was Dream. No one knew what he had done for them. Maybe if they did, he would be allowed inside. But if they did, he would also have to go help find people and bring them here, spend more time fixing the city and taking to people.

And he had no energy left to be Dream. But he was still bleeding. At least he had healed a little bit while he was transformed, so he wasn't going to die.

Yes, it hurt, yes, he felt like he couldn't breathe in too deep, and yes, he thought he may faint at any second. But he was fine.

"Oh, Clay."

The voice was so gentle that he lifted his head, eyes so cloudy he couldn't barely see clearly, but he knew who it was. The woman bent down in front of him, reaching out to put a hand on his shoulder.

"Are you ok?" She asked.

And Clay let out a sob, jumping forward to hug her. He needed this hug.

"Puffy, I-I can't do anything. He's in there and I c-can't see h-him." He buried his head in the psychologist's shoulder, and she gently patted his back.

"Are you talking about GNotFound?" She asked.

Clay froze, breathing still shaky.

"I know you're Dream, Clay." She said softly, and Clay squeezed his eyes shut, entire body shaking. "I know everything you've been through, what you've sacrificed, what you did for the city today."

Clay sobbed, tears running down his face and dampening her shirt.

"I know who GNotFound is too. And I know you do as well. And I know you love him." Puffy's eyes were tearing up too, as she hugged the teenage boy. The boy who had been through so much, for so long, with no one to talk to about it.

"He- he-" Clay couldn't get the words out, so she just shushed him gently.

"He's in the hospital, there's nothing you can do. Just focus on you right now." She pulled away so she could look at the blonde. "Are *you* ok?"

He shook his head, more tears blinking out of his eyes.

"I thought you were dead." Puffy exhaled. "I... I was terrified."



"Dead?" Clay whispered.

"Blade sent out an alert that Dream had died. I wasn't sure what to believe because I couldn't fathom it." She said.

"I'm alive." He said, but then realised that most of the city probably assumes Dream was dead as well.

"Do you want me to call someone for you? Or go get someone?" Puffy asked.

Clay took a shaky breath, chewing on his lip.

"I want my Mom." He whispered.

Puffy frowned and pulled him in for another hug, which he welcomed easily.

"I'll call Mrs Davidson, I believe she is with your sister." She said.

"But I can't leave here." Clay said, glancing at the hospital doors. "What if he needs me."

"There's not much you can do right- Clay! You're bleeding!" Puffy said, looking at his stomach.

Clay looked down, seeing blood seeping through his shirt. He winced, lifting it up and looking at the blood-soaked bandages Phil had done.

"It's fine. W-wasn't as bad as before." He mumbled.

"Shouldn't superheroes heal?" Puffy asked, concerned.

"Only when transformed. And if I got he injury while transformed." He lowered his shirt, looking at her nervously. "Which I did." He'd never had someone to talk about being a hero with. "H-how did you know I was Dream?"

"Many reasons. But it's not important. What's important is that you go transform and heal. You'll be no use to anyone, and especially not George if you're dead."

"I don't want to be Dream." He swallowed. "I want to hurt like everyone else. Look." He gestured to the dozens of injured people. "Why should they bleed and not me. Why should George be in the hospital while I get to feel no pain."

"Clay, you don't have to suffer just because everyone else is. You've suffered enough for the city. You bleeding to death isn't helping anyone, and doesn't change the fact that they are hurt too. Plus, you saved them all." Puffy said, furrowing her eyebrows as she looked at the teenager.

Clay stared at the ground, tears still rolling down his cheeks.

"I just want to see George." He whispered.

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He did in fact transform. Puffy basically gave him no choice, telling him that if he didn't go transform and heal, then she would be severely disappointed. And he didn't want to disappoint one of the only people who knew everything about him.

But once his stomach had mostly healed. Emphasis on *mostly*, he detransformed again, and returned to the hospital, seeing it was still packed and busy, with a crowd of people outside waiting

to hear if their loved ones were inside and ok.

He sat in a new spot, opposite the hospital, leaning against a tree, watching all the people. There were families, and friends, but also people who were alone. Some had injured, some were crying, some were completely fine. He didn't recognise anyone. And he hadn't yet decided if that was a good or bad thing.

He could feel the weight in his pocket that was making him feel sick, and he wanted nothing more than to be rid of it.

He had the Diamond and Sapphire in there, since he couldn't let the two unconscious boys have them. He had a feeling the hospital would remove them anyways for tests so it was safer to hold onto them.

But he could feel the weight of them, and wished he had given them to Phil as well. He had given the man the Ruby and Carnelian because he absolutely didn't want to hold all four precious jewels and the Carnelian. But he thought it would best he kept the other two, so he could return it to his friends when they awoke.

But he wasn't even allowed in the hospital to know if they were awake.

Nick.

Clay closed his eyes, letting his head fall against the tree stump.

So much had happened that he barely had time to process that Sappnap was Nick. Clay wasn't sure which injuries Nick got as a hero and what he got as a civilian. His knee was gushing blood when he saw him, and his wrist was clearly broken. But he wasn't there when it happened. He didn't know if the boy would heal if he transformed again.

Sappnap was Nick.

Clay's eyes widened.

And Sappnap knew who he was.

He wasn't sure how, and he was too preoccupied to analyse it further, but Sappnap knew to cover for Clay. When the Blade claimed that he had Clay Block, George nearly believed it and Clay couldn't prove Blade was lying without revealing his identity. But Sappnap over their earpieces had claimed he found Clay.

Well, obviously Clay knew that wasn't true. Because he was Clay.

Nick knew he was Dream.

*How?*

*For how long?*

Oh. Clay closed his eyes. *The bomb villain.*

He was taken back to Phil's by Sappnap. There was a high chance he detransformed and Nick had no choice. But why didn't him or Phil tell him? How did Nick survive not being able to talk to Clay about it?

His mind went even further back, to a conversation they had outside George's house and Clay cringed in memory. *Nick knows I'm in love with George and GNotFound.*

He didn't have time to think about the consequences of *that*, because-

"Clay!" A shriek, and Clay immediately looked up.

Drista was running through the crowd, shoving people out of her way, dirty blonde ponytail whipping in the air, tears in her eyes as she searched the area.

"Clay?" She called again. "Where are you?"

He stood up, and ran to her.

"Drista!" He called out, and she spun around, face dissolving into tears as she ran to him.

When they embraced, they didn't let go. Drista had her face buried against him, and Clay had his face pressed into her hair.

"Thank God." She whispered shakily, and Clay held her tighter.

"Clay!"

He looked up and saw Lorna rushing over, arm around Lexi who had a bandaged arm, which was bleeding through. Drista pulled away, so Lorna could hug him.

"Oh, hon, are you alright? I was worried sick about you all. Drista said your phone died, correct?" Lorna said, and Clay nodded, trying not to cry again. It was one thing to breakdown in front of his school therapist. He didn't want his little sister and George's family to see him so weak. "Dr Puffy called me to say that you were hanging around the hospital."

"I'm sorry I didn't come find you. I just..." Clay's eyes flickered back to the busy hospital, heart aching.

"It's George. Isn't it." Lorna said softly, and Clay turned back to look at her, feeling guilt creep up his body. Her son was in the hospital. George nearly killed himself for the city and Clay didn't nothing to help.

"Oh, Clay, it's alright." Lorna pulled him in for a hug again when she saw him start to tear up more.

"What happened to George?" Lexi asked, eyes wide.

"They said, um..." Clay sniffled. "He-he's unconscious. And he broke his foot and had a cut arm." Clay said shakily. "I'm so sorry." He whispered.

"It's not your fault, Clay. George is accident-prone." Lorna said calmly.

"It is my fault." He closed his eyes. If he had gotten there sooner, or done *something* helpful, than George wouldn't be in there.

"It's not." Lorna pulled back and searched his eyes, grabbing his right hand. "It's not your fault what mess George gets into." She touched his ring. "I know you would do everything to protect him, but there's only so much you can do, Clay."

He nodded, biting his lip to stop it from trembling.

"Great. Now." She clapped, and put her arm around Lexi, and linked her other one with Clay. "We are going to the school to get Lexi's arm addressed."

Clay looked back at the hospital, not wanting to leave, and not understanding why Lorna didn't seem as worried.

"When will Dad get here?" Lexi asked her Mom, and Clay's eyes widened at remembering where Mark was. Where he had taken him.

"He's already at the clinic. Called me the second all the manipulation stopped and would meet us here after I collected you both. Which by the way, where was Phil when I arrived at the store?"

Clay's face paled.

"He had to go find Tommy, that's what he said. We were safe there though, he had us locked in a room downstairs so we couldn't be found." Drista explained.

"I hope Tommy's ok." Lexi said, and Clay could only look away. He remembered the moment George took the Carnelian off. Granted, he was stabbed at the same time so was a little preoccupied, but he saw the blonde boy fall to the ground.

"Nick's in terms hospital too." Clay whispered, and they all looked at him.

"Is he ok?" Lexi asked.

"I... I think he's alright. He was unconscious so they had to admit him into the hospital." His hand brushed against his pocket, where the Diamond bracelet lay. "His wrist looked messed up." *Definitely broken.* "And he had a really bad cut on his knee." *A stab wound.* "But I think he'll be fine." *He can hopefully transform and heal.*

They reached the school, and the process seemed much more organised than the hospital which was overwhelmed by casualties. Here, they were all allowed to go together and line up for a nurse to stitch up Lexi's arm.

There were multiple lines, and they were moving slow, but they weren't too long thankfully. Clay let Drista lean against him with her eyes closed as they waited. But all he could think about was George.

George's slowing pulse, his soft breathing, as he slowly grew paler, and weaker, and the way his limp body fell into Clay's arms the second he tore off the Sapphire. The way the life was seeming to be drained out of him.

"Clay Block."

He turned at his name, and came face to face with Sam Warden, who had a bandaged head.

"Hi." Clay said, surprised at seeing the man.

"How are you both? You ok?" Sam asked, looking at him and Drista, who was just staring at the man. Clay patted her shoulder.

"Yeah, we are both fine luckily." Clay said. "What happened to you, sir?"

"Just a few stitches, not too bad." Sam waved off. "Have you heard from your father at all?"

Clay's hand tightened on Drista's arm.

"How recent are we talking?" Clay said stiffly.

"Today." Sam said, looking between the two. "But I understand you are both staying with..." He glanced at Lorna. "The Davidson's."

"I'm Lorna." She said, furrowed eyebrows. "How did you know that?"

"One of GNotFound's requests for me helping him with something was to ensure the Block siblings are safe, and can live with your family with no legal trouble." Sam said with a kind smile.

"GNotFound said that?" Drista asked, wide eyes.

"Yes, it was the only thing he asked for in return." Sam looked at her, and she furrowed her eyebrows at that, utterly confused.

"We haven't heard from father in days. Why do you ask?" Clay said, still tense.

"Well, he hasn't said anything at all about Doomsday since it started. Or how Blade managed to set off a red alert informing everyone Dream is dead. Which..." Sam pursed his lips. "Which is just horrible. He was just a kid, and-" Sam's face was contorted in slight pain.

"Is Dream really dead?" Lexi asked, and Clay nervously shifted.

"We haven't heard from him or any of the heroes. Not since the blue forcefield that covered the entire city, which everyone is assuming to be GNotFound's shield." Sam said.

"It could have been Blade trying to persuade GNotFound to give up his jewel. Or just a plain lie. We don't know if Dream is dead." Clay said, as Lorna glanced at him.

"I think we shouldn't assume anything through an alert created by the man who wanted to tear apart the city." She said, and Sam nodded in agreement.

"Well, the mansion was hit hard. The tornado bulldozed right through it." Sam said.

Clay froze at that.

"Was father in the mansion?" Drista asked.

"I'm assuming he was in his bunker the second that Doomsday started. Haven't heard from him though. You'd think, as the Mayor, you'd give a word of peace to the city in its darkest few hours." Sam said, and then his phone buzzed. He pulled it out and furrowed his eyebrows. "One second, I have a call." He stepped away.

"You two alright?" Lorna asked, putting a hand each on Clay and Drista's shoulders.

"Yeah." Clay swallowed the bile rising in his throat.

"Dad's indestructible. He'll be fine." Drista shrugged. "Maybe he got hit on the head, could knock some sense into him."

"Drista, don't talk like that." Lorna said, but had to turn away to hide her smile.

"Sorry about that. Just an update on the school situation." Sam shrugged when he returned.

"School situation?" Clay asked curiously.

"Yeah. Haven't you guys heard the news story? A high school collapsed and a bunch of students are trapped in a lower floor. They are apparently all fine, just stuck. But luckily that hero is there to

sort things."

"Hero?" Lexi asked.

Clay's eyebrows furrowed, and he counted in his head.

Dream was him.

GNotFound was in the hospital.

Sapnap was in the hospital.

"Yeah. A new hero. Haven't got his name yet, but everyone thought he was a villain at first, until he started helping get the students out of the school." Sam explained.

"A new hero." Clay said, heart racing. Sam's phone rang again, and he glanced at it.

"I really should go. I wish you all the best, and I have a feeling we'll see each other again soon." He said to Clay and Drista before walking away.

"A new hero." Clay repeated, as Drista pulled out her phone, immediately going to the city news articles.

There was live footage at Pandora high, of course, because that school was always in the middle of everything. It focused on a figure, who clearly had super strength, moving large pieces of debris and fallen building away. It focused on him.

His costume was mostly black with red features along it. It covered his head as a hood, with small red devil horns sticking out the top. His face was covered with a dark grey mask, covering nearly his entire face but his eyes and smile.

And he had a bright red earring dangling from his ear.

Clay's heart went from racing to stopped completely, and thought he was going to have a heart attack.

"Where did he come from?" Lexi asked.

"I like his devil horns." Drista said.

Clay stood up straight, looking away from the phone. Is that what Phil meant when he said *I'll take care of the city*. Did he already pass on the Ruby? A jewel that had only been in the hands of evil. A jewel they had fought so long to take. A jewel that gave the wearer the power of *manipulation*.

He swallowed and looked out of the window. Maybe he should be helping the city. Let everyone know Dream wasn't dead.

He felt someone grab his hand, and he looked down to see Drista, and she smiled at him.

"I'm glad you're ok." She whispered, and Clay smiled back with a small sigh, trying to relax.

"And you." Maybe he needed some time.

Lexi eventually got allocated to a nurse, who gave her local anaesthetic before beginning stitches in the knife wound on her arm. Lorna and Drista each sat beside her on the free chairs, while Clay offered to stand.

He was pacing slightly, eyes looking out of the window at the hospital in the distance. He has no

way of knowing when George or Nick would be ok.

"Can I charge my phone?" Clay asked the nurse. He looked at him, and then nodded.

"There's a communal area with free water, fruit and phone charges. It's in the cafeteria." He said.

"I'll meet you guys there?" Clay said to them, and Lorna and Lexi nodded, but Drista stood up.

"I'll come with you." She grabbed his hand, and they walked away.

"Do you think father will bother contacting us?" Drista asked as they walked. Clay stiffened slightly.

"I don't know. He wouldn't contact me, at least. Maybe you."

"He didn't kick me out, but he also hasn't bothered trying to track me down after I clearly followed you." She said.

"I don't know." Clay said softly, as they walked into the cafeteria of the elementary school. Drista went to get some bottles of water, while Clay walked over to grab a charging cord, and then went to the corner of the cafeteria to plug it in, sitting on the small kids chairs at the short tables.

The phone started blinking as it was plugged in, but he put it on the table with a sigh as it slowly charged. Drista returned with the water and two apples. Clay couldn't bare to eat though, but he accepted the water, chugging it.

"Come on." Clay muttered, tapping on the table as he stared at the charging phone.

"You hoping for news on George?" Drista asked, and Clay looked at her.

"I mean... yeah. And Nick." He said, looking back at the blank phone.

Drista nodded, taking a bite of her apple.

"Do you love George?" She asked, and it made Clay choke from the unexpected question. He coughed a few times, looking at her with confusion.

"What? Why would you ask that?"

"Cause you act like he's your husband or something. I dunno." She scoffed.

Clay just scoffed back.

And she scoffed once more.

Clay rolled his eyes, looking back at his phone. Drista took another bite, watching her brother closely.

"Yeah." Clay mumbled, and Drista hid her grin behind the fruit.

"Yeah?" She said.

"Yeah." Clay blushed.

And then his phone turned on, and he scrambled to type in his code, barely giving the device time to connect to any signal.

And when it did, it filled with spam. From texts, to group chats, to instagram and snapchat. Everything had dozens of notifications.

He went to his messages with George first, but the last message he had sent was hours ago, before they even met with the Blade for the first time.

He sighed, and clicked on Nick's contact, but his messages were also hours ago.

So it was rather convenient, and also a relief, when his phone started buzzing, and *Nick's* face came onto the screen, a ridiculous contact photo popping up that Nick took himself.

Clay nearly dropped his phone in a rush to answer it, but he hastily shoved it to his ear.

"Nick!" He just about yelled into the phone.

"Clay. Clay! I'm Ssnap. I'm Ssnap, and I know you're Dream, and I've lost my Diamond. I lost it. Blade took it. I'm in the hospital. I don't remember anything before Blade touched me. He manipulated me, didn't he? And I told him everything. I know all of our identities so I must have told him e-everything." He heard Nick take a shaky breath, and realised in horror that the boy was crying. He had never heard Nick cry. "I-It's my fault. We lost. He won, didn't he. He took the jewels."

"Nick." Clay interrupted, glancing at his sister. She raised and eyebrows, and he gave her a guilty look. "Can you give me a few minutes to talk with Nick, Drista?" He asked.

She nodded, and left without complaint. Which was very unlike her, but given the circumstance she may have just given in.

"I fucked everything up. I knew it. I shouldn't have been given the Diamond back. GNotFound was right to take it, I messed it all up." Nick sobbed.

"Nick, we won." Clay said softly, and heard the shaky intake of breath on the other end. "I have your Diamond, it's safe. Blade's Ruby was taken. All the manipulation is stopped. We won. You did perfect." He said with a smile, tears forming in his eyes again.

"Really?" Nick whispered.

"Yes."

"Where's GNotFound?" He asked.

"You said you know all of our identities." Clay sat back in the seat, eyes wide. "You know who GNotFound is."

"Um. Yeah." Nick said awkwardly.

"I do too." Clay chuckled.

"You... you know." Nick said slowly.

"Yes, I know it's George."

"Oh." Nick let out a soft whistle. "So you finally fucking realised you love the same damn person. You fucking imbecile."

"Nick." Clay gasped slightly. "No need to be so harsh. I've known since ice skating."



"Oh. Well. Still. You're an idiot."

"No, you are. And when did you figure out I was Dream? Gave me damn heart attack when you said you had *found Clay*."

"You detransformed in front of me after the bomb villain." Nick said, as Clay had guessed. "And where's George now?"

Clay's smile fell, and he swallowed.

"Clay?" Nick didn't like the silence.

"He-" Clay couldn't say another word. He knows if he did, he would let out a sob. He looked up in the air and took a deep breath. "He's fine."

"Really?" Nick said. "That's a relief. Would have assumed he'd do some self-sacrificial shit, you know? End up being a martyr or something."

Clay couldn't even hum in response.

"Anyways. When are you coming here to give me back my Diamond. I know my wrist was broken before anything happened, so at least that'll fix. Fingers crossed that my epic stab wound will heal too."

"I..." Clay took a controlled breath. "I can't get in, it's for patients only."

"But you're Dream."

"I know, but-"

"Dude. If you're going to take advantage of your fame at any time, it'll be now. Because I want to leave this stupid place and go see my family, too."

"I can't just barge in there in bright green holding a Diamond bracelet asking to see Nick Armstrong, that's not subtle at all. Plus, everyone thinks Dream is dead."

"I don't care how you do it, bring me my bracelet, dipshit." Nick hung up.

Clay lowered his phone from his ear, his other hand falling to his pocket, where he felt the weight of the bracelet.

"Is Nick alright?" Drista asked, walking back over.

Clay looked up.

"He's perfect."

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"Should you even be standing?" Phil eyed Nick, who rolled his eyes and cracked his neck.

"I'm healed now. Clay was being a little bitch and wouldn't sneak into the hospital, but he did give me the bracelet when I was discharged. And now I've healed." Nick said, shaking out his wrist.

"And where is Clay now?" Phil furrowed his eyebrows.

"Where do you think?" Nick said.

"He's not still in the hospital, is he?" Phil furrowed his eyebrows.

"Well, he's technically not *in* the hospital. He's outside it." Nick shrugged. "They still aren't letting anyone in, unless you're like, a kid under 10, then you get a parent. But it's still packed with patients."

"It's been an entire day, they still aren't letting people in?" Phil asked.

"Nope. And they're shit at communicating. George's parents got one phone call about him last night and that's it." Nick sighed.

"And how is he? George?" Phil asked with a frown.

"He hasn't woken up yet. Something about his brain healing." Nick shrugged. Phil swallowed and looked away.

"That's what happened to me."

"How long were you in a coma for?" Nick asked nervously.

"A few months." Phil winced. "But George didn't use the two jewels together for that long, and I used three precious jewels. But he's also just a kid, and I have no clue what effects his power would have had on him."

"He'll be ok, though right? Clay's a fucking mess."

"I imagine. He loved him."

"*Loves* him." Nick corrected. "Did you know Clay's known who GNotFound was for weeks?"

Phil stared at him, jaw slack.

"Are you serious?"

"Yeah, he kept it to himself. George didn't know. He only knew that Clay knew."

"Shit. So Clay knew GNotFound. George knew Sapnap and you knew Dream. For ages. Fuck, if I had known that sooner-"

"What would you do? Take our gems?" Nick raised an eyebrow

"No, I just... I feel like we could have taken some more precautions." Phil said carefully.

"Like any of that would have stopped Techno." Nick scoffed.

Phil looked down, pursing his lips and chewing on his tongue at the mention of his name.

"Sorry." Nick said softly.

Techno was taken into a jail cell. They decided they wouldn't do anything about him until the city recovered and the heroes made themselves known. A trial would be done, after interrogations. But the city had to heal first.

"I can't believe what he did, and to Tommy..." Phil closed his eyes and swallowed. "Techno

wouldn't even tell me where he put Tommy. I had to get Halo to manipulate him into telling me."

"Oh yeah. Halo. Who the fuck is that guy. I saw on the news there was a new hero who had Blade's earring and I pretty much shat myself on the spot." Nick said.

"You and George were severely injured. Clay was exhausted, still injured, and rightfully distressed. But the city had just gone through Doomsday II, and there were still people who needed help. I can't transform, I tried. So I got someone to help out a little.

"Another teenager." Nick rolled his eyes. "Of course."

"This is different. I took the Ruby back." He held up the earring. "And there is no supervillain to be fighting anymore. No one has to live a double life."

"Well, touch fucking wood." Nick slammed his hand on the table between them. "Jesus Christ, Phil. Are you trying to jinx it? Wouldn't be surprised if there's another villain coming for the city or the jewels. You said you don't have them all."

"Yes, I don't have them all but I have most of them."

"Except the ones Blade still hadn't used." Nick pointed out.

"At the interrogation we will use the truth-telling jewel or the Ruby to get the information out. You don't have to worry anymore. Go be with your loved ones." Phil said calmly.

"One of my loved ones created a blue fucking bomb and is lying in a hospital bed attached to wires, and the other is pretty much depressed since he can't see him. My two best friends are in love with each other, finally figured it out, and I have to sit here, and WAIT for the more clueless one to wake the fuck up." Nick hit his fist on the table. "I don't think you understand how long I've waited for them to fall in love. And now it has to be dragged out more? MORE?"

"Trust me, I know. I've known for a while."

"George has been in love with Clay since that blonde bitch moved here. Don't talk to me about how long *you've* waited. I've had to hear George talk every day about how *pretty Clay's eyes are*, and oh, *how fluffy his hair is*."

Nick mimicked George's voice in a high-pitched British accent.

"I swear, it's like there's some *higher being* that is controlling our lives and purposefully dragging out their stupid love story for their own sick pleasure." Nick gritted his teeth. "If DreamNotFound doesn't have a happy fucking ending, I'm going to take the Carnelian and use my Bolt on myself. And I don't want to know what that would do."

"You're ridiculous. No one is *controlling* the world. Everyone makes their own destiny." Phil said calmly.

"Well if there is someone deciding what happens, I just want to say FUCK YOU." Nick stood up and looked to the ceiling. "Whoever you are, whoever is fucking with me and my friends' lives, can you finally quit it? This has been dragging on for way too long and I'm sick of this shit!"

"Nick, stop yelling." Phil sighed. "God won't listen."

"I wouldn't call them God." Nick shrugged, sitting back down. "No, whoever is fucking with me just wants to see chaos."

"You're insane."

"No, I'm Sapnap." Nick stood up. "And my buddy Dream needs my help."

"Can you tell Clay I'm here if he wants to talk. I haven't had a chance since Doomsday and I need to thank him for everything he's done." Phil said, standing up too.

"I think you should say that to him and George together. They have been a team from the start, Clay won't listen to you without his partner by his side. Also, the city still thinks Dream is dead." Nick said with pursed lips, and Phil nodded.

"Yes, I'm aware. But they also haven't heard anything from any of you. So keep me updated on George, and once everyone recovers, we can organise a message or something."

"Alright. And don't go creating new heroes without letting me know. Can't replace the Dream Team that easily, *Liberator*." Nick tsked as he walked to door.

"Dream team? Since when did Clay pronounce himself as the leader."

"Did you hear the second part? *Team*, Phil."

Nick crossed his arms over his chest, staring at the older man.

"We've always been a team."

•

The first thing George felt, was cold. The first thing he heard was a dull beeping. And the first thing he saw was a bright light.

He groaned softly, closing his eyes again to avoid the harsh light, and twisting around in the bed he was in. How did he get in a bed? Why is the light on?

*"You're just a kid, and that energy-"*

*"I'm just a kid."*

George immediately sat up, feeling everything at once, and he gasped in pain. His head throbbed instantly and his bones screamed at him to lie back down. It felt like every muscle in his body was dragging him down.

There was something pressing against his face, over his mouth and nose, digging into his cheeks.

He felt someone touch his shoulder and he pulled away, turning to look at them, but everything was blurry. He wiped his eyes, and frantically looked around the room.

"Lie down." A woman's voice was beside him, gently reaching to touch him again but he pulled away, shaking his head.

He reached for the ventilator and tore it off over his face before she could even say anything.

"Where is..." His voice was scratchy. "Blade. Where.... Doomsday. Dream... I-"

"Can you lie down for me, take a deep breath." A new voice this time, startling him from his left, and he jumped in fright, pushing back against the bed. He shook his head, looking around the room.

He was in the hospital.

It was so loud now. The beeping was getting louder and the sterile room was getting smaller. He was suffocating. He couldn't breathe.

"He's hyperventilating. Put the ventilator back on." Someone said, and felt someone touch his arm again, but he pushed them away.

"Clay!" He called out, voice hoarse. "Wh-where's Clay." He looked down at his arms and saw his right one was bandaged, but his left hand had a tube sticking out the back of it.

He reached for it, but someone grabbed his arm and stopped him.

"No!" He tried to pull his arm out of their grip, but they moved his arm down by his side. "No! No, no, n-" He wheezed as he breathed in.

"It's ok. You have a few injuries as a casualty from Doomsday three days ago, but you are now in the hospital receiving treatment." The nurse said, trying to sound calm and kind.

"Three-" His voice disappeared into a wheeze as breath escaped him.

But what happened? Where was Blade? And his family? And Nick? And Clay.

George reached for his chest, hand flat against his heart and his stomach dropped.

His Sapphire was gone.

He shoved the man with all his might, and tore out the wires on his hand and attached to his chest. He stood up out of bed, and nearly screamed in pain when his ankle hit the floor, but he gritted his teeth. The room was spinning, and he could barely see where the exit was.

Someone grabbed him around the chest, but he elbowed them in the stomach and they let go with a groan. He then dodged out of the way of two other people. People were shouting. It was too loud.

He ran out of the room, wheezing and limping and muscles weak. Everything was spinning and he couldn't tell which way to go.

"What- George!" His name was called, but he kept going down the hall. His ankle was shooting pain up his leg, and it nearly gave out beneath him multiple times.

Someone wrapped their arms around his stomach, and he screamed, tugging at them to let go.

"No! No, p-please. I have to go." He sobbed, legs finally giving out, falling to the floor with the person still holding him.

His Sapphire was gone. He doesn't know what happened. He lost everyone. He had to find them. Had to make sure Techno was locked up. Find where the jewels are.

"I have t-to go." He cried.

The person pulled him close to their chest, pulling him into their lap, practically cradling him, a hand brushing through his hair.

"Shh." Their voice was soft, rocking him slightly to calm him down, but George couldn't stop crying and wheezing. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't think. He lost his Sapphire. His one job.

He weakly punched against their chest, trying to pull away, but all his limited energy had been exerted into running out of the room. His muscles ached like someone had punched each and every one. His head throbbed and he thought it would make him black out.

"You don't have to go anywhere." The person whispered, holding him close and gently brushing through his hair.

"I n-need Clay." George sobbed, and the person held him tighter.

"I'm right here, Georgie."

He lifted his head and met two bright eyes, staring straight at him. Their noses were nearly touching, George could see all his starry freckles and soft hair.

"Dream." He whispered, voice barely audible, as tears blinked out of his eyes.

"It's over, George." Clay smiled, tears forming in his own eyes, a hand raising to cup George's jaw, thumb brushing softly against his cheek.

"It's over?" He whispered shakily, clutching at Clay's shirt, searching Clay's bright eyes.

"Yes." Clay said softly, so much adoration in his eyes as he looked at the smaller boy in his hold.

George took a deep shaky breath, copying Clay's.

"I..." He slowly blinked. "I can... *sleep*?"

"Yes." Clay let out a watery laugh, both hands now holding George's face, a fond smile settling across his features. "You can sleep. You can rest, George."

George stared at the boy for a long moment, as his veins settled and his heart calmed down.

He leaned forward so his forehead hit against Clay's, and he closed his eyes in exhaustion.

"We won?" He whispered shakily.

Clay pulled back after a moment to press a long, gentle kiss against his forehead, and then readjusted the boy so his head was resting against his chest, and he was holding him tightly.

"Yes, G." He whispered back with a smile, letting his chin fall against the top of George's head, closing his eyes, blinking out tears as he shakily took a breath.

"We won."

•

George refused to let go of Clay after that. The nurses eventually got him back to his room, but Clay had to carry him back himself.

"What happened." George asked him softly, as they lay in the hospital bed together. The Doctor had to run a few quick standard tests on George, retaking his blood pressure and attaching him to the drip again, but they eventually left.

"What do you remember?" Clay said, delicately threading their hands together.

"All of it. But I don't know what happened after." He said, swallowing. "Where's Blade? And my

Sapphire? And my family? And N- I mean... Sapnap?"

"I know Sapnap is Nick." Clay said with a light laugh. "I came to the city centre to see Nick lying on the floor, Blade holding his trident with the Diamond bracelet, and you putting on the Carnelian. Nick was shocking, yes, but not my main priority at the time." He explained.

"What happened after that?" George said, and Clay squeezed his hands, which hadn't stopped shaking since he woke up.

"You took Blade's Ruby. But your Shield didn't stop. I tried to take the Carnelian off, but nothing happened."

"You have to take off the original jewel." George said.

"I figured that out when I took it off. And you collapsed. Nick was unconscious too, but he's ok." Clay said, and George squeezed his hand in relief. "Broken wrist and stitches in his knee that healed the next day when I returned his Diamond to him. He's as lively as ever."

"Thank God." George sighed in relief "And my family? And Drista?"

"All fine. Lexi's arm is fixed. Your Dad is no longer manipulated, and they are on their way as well. I just... got here first."

"How? You're still staying at my house."

"I haven't really gone home too much." Clay chuckled, slightly embarrassed. "I wanted to be here the second they let me."

"Three days, Clay." George's eyes widened.

"I slept a bit. Lorna forced me home for dinner. But I just snuck out again when I could."

George reached up, touching the bags under Clay's eyes, hating how much of himself he saw in the boy. Clay's been suffering the same as him the whole time. Clay's understood him more than he realised.

George closed his eyes.

"Where's Blade?" George whispered, lowering his hand.

"In holding. They aren't doing anything until the city recovers and the heroes make a statement."

"And Tommy?" His eyes snapped open, sitting up a little straighter. "Tommy was Carnelian. Clay, Tommy-"

"Tommy's ok." Clay said, grabbing both of George's hands. "He was unharmed, just a lot of memory loss. He was manipulated, not willingly following Techno."

"But he's ok?" George asked.

"Yes. He's ok."

"And everyone else?"

"The entire group is fine now. Mostly. Quackity was manipulated early on, no gem, just disruptive. He doesn't remember what happened but Karl said he was helping destroy the school. Apparently

he had some matches."

"Like Dad." George snorted. "And he was ok?"

"Perfectly fine. Lost a beanie but he'll survive. I think everyone else was mostly unhurt."

"You think?"

"Honestly, I haven't been on my phone too much, and I've only seen Nick." Clay said, a little guilty. "I was too worried about you."

"And me?" George looked down at himself, at the wires and hospital gown. "What's wrong with me?"

"You've been in a coma for three days. And got stitches in your arm. They only started letting people come in today. The hospital has been so crowded with people, they opened up a second clinic at the elementary school. But you've been here." Clay brought George's hand up to his lips, pressing a gentle kiss against the back of it. "I haven't seen you until now."

George didn't miss the way Clay's voice shook when he said that, and he looked up at the blonde boy, seeing his eyes shiny and cheeks blotchy. George reached up, fingers pressing shakily against his jaw.

"I had signed a hundred forms this morning and was walking up to see you. But then this beautiful guy ran down the hall in a hospital gown, and I couldn't help but get distracted." Clay said, grinning. George rolled his eyes.

"You really are Dream." George whispered, looking at the ring on his hand and Clay nodded, smile falling as he swallowed nervously.

"You said once you would hate if we were the same person." Clay said softly.

"What?" George asked, eyes wide.

"You said you'd hate it because you'd lose one of us. You'd lose Clay or Dream." Clay looked away, and George forced his head to look at him again.

"I don't think I considered how perfect it would be if you were the same. And you *are* the same. I get the two people in the entire world who understand me, who care for me, and listen to me. Who I love, and who I *trust*. Both in one." Clay wiped one of George's tears that had escaped as he spoke. "You mean everything to me. I was scared for a while, of falling in love with a boy who hid behind a mask, who I couldn't see in any scenario other than a dangerous one. I thought it wasn't possible."

He took a shaky breath.

"But I couldn't help it. And I got so lucky. You're my entire world Clay. You're *both* my worlds." George whispered.

Clay pushed George's hair behind his ear, inching closer to the boy beside him, noses nearly brushing.

"I couldn't have wished for anything better." Clay whispered, closing his eyes, hand reaching up to gently cup George's cheek, thumb brushing against his cheekbone, feeling a small scar. "You're not just my world, George... you're my gravity."



George breathing stuttered slightly, closing his eyes as well, at the feeling of Clay's light breath blowing against his lips.

"You keep me grounded. You keep me sane. You're the only thing tying me to this horrible planet."

"I am?" George whispered.

"You are." And he finally pressed his lips to George, soft and gentle. It tasted sweet and pure, unlike their first which was desperation and metallic and grief.

Their first kiss was fuelled by uncertainty, it was emotional and red and painful. It was fuelled by love, and guilt, and grief, by the thought that this could be their last moment. Their last chance.

This kiss was fuelled by relief, with the promise of time, the promise of more. This kiss could be savoured, and cherished, existing with one another with the certainty of tomorrow.

When Clay pulled away, George burst into tears, and his first thought was that he had done something horribly wrong, or hurt the boy in any way.

"What? What happened? Did I hurt you?" Clay said quickly.

"You can't do that again. You can't scare me. I thought you were dead." George sobbed, and Clay sighed slightly in relief, and pulled George close again.

"I could say the same for you." Clay said.

"There was so much b-blood."

"And there was so much blue." Clay pressed a kiss into his hair.

"You were dying." George whispered.

"And you were killing yourself." Clay closed his eyes.

"And I want some compensation for the shit I've had to deal with." A new voice came from the door. They both turned to look, and saw Nick standing there, arms crossed like he was mad, but the smile creeping onto his face said otherwise.

"Nick." George tried to get up to run to him, but Clay held him back. George wasn't allowed up, so Nick ran to his side, and the two embraced.

"You're ok." George sobbed in relief, and Nick closed his eyes.

"And so are you."

"You scared me so bad... when Blade stabbed you, and threatened to kill you, I-"

"Woah. Threatened to kill me?" Nick pulled away with a smile. "I don't remember what happened. What did he say? How close did he get?" He sounded almost excited at the thought.

"He manipulated you." George wiped his eyes, and scooted closer to Clay again, patting the space on his left for Nick.

"Is there enough room?" Nick asked, eyeing up the bed.

"Of course there is." Clay said with a laugh, and Nick eagerly lay down in the bed, being careful of the wires, but immediately letting his head fall on George's shoulder, an arm lazily crossing both boys in a big embrace.

"No homo, though." Nick yawned. "I have a boyfriend."

"No homo." Clay chuckled, and then sent a wink to George who smiled and rolled his eyes.

"This is just Dream Team bonding." Nick mumbled.

"No one approved of that name." George scoffed lightly.

"I did. We're a team. And it's a dream." Clay winked.

"It's not a dream. There *is* a Dream." George rolled his eyes.

"Well we are a team at least." Nick said, looking at his two best friends. "Right?"

"Of course." Clay smiled, reaching over to mess up Nick's hair. "We've always been a team."

Nick smiled at that, letting his head fall back down on George's shoulder, yawning once more.

George was tired too. He wanted nothing more to sleep but he had so many unanswered questions.

"My Sapphire." He said, looking at Clay through tired eyes. "You have it?"

Clay smiled, and reached for his pocket.

"I believe this belongs to you." He said, lifting up the bright blue Sapphire, sparking in the light of the room.

George hated how much relief he felt when he saw it, and the calmness he felt when he touched it. He used to hate it, with a passion, and everything it represented for him. But his Sapphire is a part of him now.

George carefully took it, seeing how his hand was still shaking. It hadn't stopped since he woke up and he wasn't sure why. He put the pendent over his neck, and breathed out at the familiar weight pressing against his heart.

But when he looked down, he froze. And blinked.

"No." He whispered.

"What?" Nick mumbled, lifting his head lazily to look at George, seeing Clay staring at the pendent too, both looking slightly pale.

"No. No." George gripped the jewel.

"What's wrong?"

"It's not blank." George twisted the gleaming Sapphire. "It's supposed to be blank when I wear it."

"Is it broken?" Nick asked, blinking.

George sat up, the two boys either side of him being pushed off slightly, and he gripped the pendent tight.

"Mask on."

And nothing happened.

"Mask on." He repeated.

"George-"

"Mask *on*." He was clutching it so tight he thought the jewel would cut his hand.

Clay put his hand over the top of George's on the pendent, and used his other to turn George to look at him.

"It's not working. Why isn't it working." George's breathing was increasing, and the machine he was attached too was slowly beeping louder as well. Clay and Nick both glanced at it, before looking at each other and then back at George.

"You're still recovering, George." Clay said, trying to get George to lie down again, but the boy didn't budge, shoulders rising and falling quickly.

"Mask on." He said again.

"George, let me have the Sapphire." Clay said gently.

"No. No. Mask on. Mask *on*." His voice was coming out in desperation, panic clear in his tone.

"Please. *Mask on*."

"Someone's going to come check on him, make him calm down now." Nick said, looking at Clay.

"Ok. Ok, George, look at me." Clay said, cupping George's cheeks. "It's ok, everything will be ok, once you get better, you'll be able to transform."

"I-I- what if I end up l-like Phil." George sobbed, and Clay pulled him close to him.

"That won't happen." He took one deep breath. "Can you hear my breathing? Can you copy it?"

"M-mask-"

"G." Clay stroked his hair. "Deep breath, ok." He whispered, and George obeyed, taking one long shaky breath.

There were footsteps outside the door, and Clay quickly tucked George's pendent beneath his gown, as two nurses ran in.

"Both of you move, his heart rate is too high." A nurse said. Clay didn't budge, but Nick stood up.

"He's fine, just panicking. But he's calming down." Nick said, gesturing to George who had his face hidden against Clay's chest, listening for the deep breaths to copy, as the dirty blonde stroked his hair.

"What set it off?"

"Um. He just... remembered... about Doomsday. And got... stressed?" Nick offered.

"If it happens again, buzz us. The Doctor will be back soon with his test results." The nurse said, eyeing both the boys. "Ok, neither of you should be in the actual bed."

"If you think that kid is leaving him, then you're an idiot." Nick said, pointing with his thumb at Clay. "And if you think I'm going to pass up on bro-bonding time, then you're severely mistaken."

"One in the bed." The other nurse said, before the both left.

And Nick promptly lay back down with his two best friends.

"I'm broken." George whispered, eyes droopy and muscles achey.

"You're not broken, you're just a little bit hurt." Clay said calmly.

"The Sapphire is supposed to h-heal me. But I can't even t-transform." He was still shaky, but he's been shaky since he woke up and Clay wondered if it was a side effect of using the Carnelian. Along with his exhaustion, weakness, and inability to transform.

"Everything will turn out ok, I'm sure." Nick said, patting George's arm. "Techno was still able to transform after doing what you did."

"What if I can't be GNotFound anymore." George whispered, still feeling the weight of the Sapphire on his heart. "GNotFound won't exist anymore."

"That's not true." Clay pressed his lips against George's forehead.

"You'll always be GNotFound to us."

## Chapter End Notes

Me: "I'll write a shorter chapter today"

Also me: *"9k words of stuff we already know"*

There are definitely some mistakes in this. Hopefully not major ones.

I cried a little bit when I wrote Clay and Puffy's scene and also when Clay was holding George in the hallway after he ran out of the room. I don't know why. Something about them both finally reaching the end and letting themselves be vulnerable. I think I was just on my period, because the scenes really weren't that sad.

We are nearing the end and it's making me so sad, I feel like I've raised these characters as my children and seeing things finally going their way makes me feel proud.

I was going to start the chapter with George's scene, but I realised we haven't had enough of Clay recently, and threw in a bit of Sapnap too. And a three-day random cut would have been too abrupt.

And yes, I called myself out with Sapnap's scene. I simultaneously feel his pain in this love story being dragged out, but yes, I enjoyed every second of angst.

Anyways. Go follow me on Twitter, I'm hilarious. And am preparing a new dnf story so go there to know when I create it.

@/LottiarAT



# Have been strong for so long

## Chapter Summary

Still weak and shaky, George snaps at Clay for helping him too much, and tries to investigate how long it will take for him to transform again. Clay has his father to think about, and Sapnap is, frankly, just sick of them.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George gritted his teeth the second he felt Clay's hands on his waist.

"You're doing great George." The nurse said, as he took a slow step forward, leaning on the forearm crutches. Clay's hands followed beside him.

"You're a pro." Clay smiled, and George looked away, jaw ticking.

He had to walk from one side of the room to the other using his new forearm crutches. Both his legs were weak, all his muscles in his body were. And apparently one of his feet is much worse than the other. They did an x-ray and the Doctors were confused about its healing process. Apparently it had looked like there were multiple breaks, but the foot had partially healed itself.

The worst issue he has is the shaking. His hands haven't stopped shaking since he woke up a few days ago. Even now, they were making the crutches wobble slightly.

"Ok, Clay can you move away for a little bit? Need to see how George can do without the stabilisation." The nurse said.

Clay reluctantly stepped back, after helping George turn around from the wall.

"What if he falls?" Clay asked, as George took a step forward. He had to stop himself from scoffing at that. "He has a slight concussion, right?" *Bullshit*, George thinks he's fine. He doesn't even remember hitting his head at any point in the fight.

"He shouldn't fall, that's the point of the crutches. But we are all here if anything does happen."

He walked back across the room, a little extra shaky now Clay wasn't helping him stabilise. But he thought he was doing perfectly fine.

"He's so shaky and weak. What if he had a wheelchair? I would personally wheel him everywhere if he could get it." Clay said, still watching George as he spoke to the nurse and Lorna.

George stopped, stood up straight and pulled both the forearm crutches off his arms, dropping them to the floor, and walking towards the door.

"George." Clay rushed forward, grabbing him again.

George just shoved the boy away, and continued limping towards the door.

"I can fucking walk myself." He seethed, slamming open the door and leaving the room. He had literally ran out of his room down the hall right after he woke up after the three days unconscious. He's fine. Sure, the Doctors said something about *adrenaline* but if he managed to run then, he can most certainly walk now.

His right foot was sending shooting pains up his leg, and both limbs were trembling from the weight now on them, but he just gritted his teeth and walked back towards his room.

"George, stop." Clay ran in front of him, putting his hands on his arms to stop him. "You can walk but not for long. They are to help you so you don't have a fall or get really exhausted." Clay said.

"I'm not weak, Clay." George bit back, trying to pull backwards from Clay, but he didn't have enough strength compared to the grip on his biceps.

"Your muscles are." Clay looked beyond George at the Nurse and Lorna who had followed.

"We can take a break. I think it's nearly lunch now anyways, why don't we go back to your room, George." The nurse said, walking over while carrying a folded wheelchair.

"I don't need that. I can walk to the room." He scoffed, eyeing the chair.

"It's just standards that we wheel you back, can't have an accident in the hallways, can we?" She said, smiling. She was perfectly kind, but George was at his limit.

He tried to pull back from Clay again, but the attempt was feeble. Clay lowered his hands to George's waist, looking at him concerned.

"Your room is just down the hall, just let us wheel you back." Clay said.

"Or you can practice using the crutches." Lorna suggested.

"Let go." George said to Clay, who slowly removed his hands, but kept them hovering. George glared at him. "I'm not going to fall!" He moved around Clay and continued walking down the hall. But it was closer to limping.

"Georgie, come on." Clay caught up, and stuck out his arm, hooking George's with it. "At least lean on me."

"Stop fucking touching me, Clay!" George yelled, pulling his arm back, and accidentally moving away more than he should, until he pressed against the wall.

Clay froze, staring at George with guilt and worry.

"I don't need anyone to hold me. I don't need help. Can't you just *fuck off* and leave me be, I don't need you." George glared at the boy.

Clay looked like he had been punched, personally by George. George felt instantly awful when he saw the hurt look in his eyes.

Lorna walked over, and put a hand on Clay's shoulder.

"I think Nick is downstairs, why don't you go see him and I'll call you a little later." She said to him. Clay didn't take his eyes off George, who was taking several deep breaths like he had sprinted down the hall.

The brunette had stopped looking at Clay, now looking at the ground, hands behind him pressing

against the wall to hold himself up.

"Okay." Clay said softly, and put his hands in his pockets, before walking back down the hall.

George listened to his footsteps leave, and felt himself tearing up.

"George, get in the chair." His mother said. He quickly wiped his eyes with the back of his hand before looking up, seeing her now holding the wheelchair, while the Nurse stood to the side, looking a little awkward

"I don't need it." He argued back, a little softer.

"Alright. Fine." Lorna passed it back over to the Nurse. "Walk back to the room, then." She said.

George looked at her for a moment, briefly looking back down the hall, but Clay had already disappeared. He took a deep breath as he stepped away from the wall, and started walking.

He kept his right hand gliding against the wall as he slowly limped back, clenching his jaw so tight for each step.

His right foot gave out about halfway down the hallway, but his Mom was there to grab him under the arm before he fully fell.

"Chair?" She said, a little sternly. George just shamefully nodded, face red and eyes stinging.

He was wheeled the rest of the way in silence by the Nurse, and he kept his head down. And when they reached the room, his mother knew better than to help him into the bed. He stood up himself and lay down, staring immediately at the ceiling, folding his hands across his stomach.

"Thank you." Lorna thanked the Nurse, who left the room, and his mother closed the door.

"Please don't yell at me." George closed his eyes.

"I'm not going to yell at you." Lorna said, and there was a slight dip in the bed as she sat down.

"It's humiliating." George's voice was shaky like his hands, and he shook his head as small tears formed behind his eyelids. "Everyone watching me like I'm an elderly person about to fall over any second. And being treated like a child as if I don't know how to make my own decisions."

"Maybe you are acting like a child. Refusing help, not listening to what we are saying, and throwing a tantrum." Lorna said.

George opened his eyes and looked at her.

"You said you wouldn't yell at me." He said.

"When did I raise my voice?" She asked, and then poked him in the chest. "Lecturing you for being stupid is not yelling."

"I yelled." He said softly, Clay's hurt eyes flashing in his head.

"You did."

George pressed the heels of his palms against his eyes, willing the tears to stop.

"He treats me like I'm going to crumble any second. I hate him seeing me this weak, I... I'm not



weak." *I'm GNotFound. He loves a superhero and here I am, a weak civilian.*

"You're strong, George. But you're injured, and it's ok. He doesn't see you as weak, he just doesn't want to see you get hurt again." Lorna said.

"He looks at me like I'm vulnerable."

"No, he looks at you like he's afraid to lose you again. It was scary, those few days, especially since we couldn't come see you." She said. George swallowed the lump in his throat.

"Can you apologise to him for me? The session was just a lot and I lashed out." He said softly.

"You can apologise yourself."

"He probably doesn't want to come see me for a bit. I hurt him." George said, lip trembling slightly.

"That boy is so in love I think even if you stabbed him and said you hated him, he would still come running when you asked." Lorna said, standing up. "But I think he needs a little bit of time out of the hospital, anyways. You're getting discharged tomorrow, assuming you pass the crutches assessment. You can see him when we get home, ok? I'm going to make Nick take him out somewhere today."

"Ok." George said quietly, pulling the blanket up to his chest. "Can you tell him I'm sorry please?" He whispered.

"Like I said, you're going to do that tomorrow. Get some sleep, and don't go walking on that foot." She said, leaning down to press a kiss against his forehead.

"Love you, Mom. I'm so that glad you, Dad, and Lexi were ok." He said.

"Love you too, George." She stroked his hair before leaving.

Once she closed the door, George sat up and closed his eyes.

"Mask on."

Nothing happened, and he pulled the Sapphire out from under the shirt, seeing it still shining blue, not blank or hidden at all. Like it didn't even sense him wearing it.

"Mask on." He repeated.

Nothing.

•

"I don't think I can handle seeing them all." Clay said, sitting down on the bench, putting his head in his hands.

"Come on, dude. You haven't seen our friends since Doomsday." Nick sighed.

"I've been preoccupied." Clay defended himself. He had been with George the whole, and was also stressing about his father.

The Mayor was perfectly fine after Doomsday II. Hid in his bunker the whole time, and didn't bother saying anything to the city.

But he did message both Clay and Drista.

*I need you home this weekend for a campaign. You can quit acting like little kids now.*

Clay didn't respond, but he didn't block the message like Nick had told him to: "*He kicked you out, why's he calling you a kid!*" Clay just stared at his father's message occasionally.

Sam was quick to accuse the Mayor after Doomsday. It was the perfect time, kick him while he was down and the city was healing. Sam came bounding in with ideas for replenishment and reconstruction, while the Mayor said a few words about how truly devastating the fatalities were.

The election had been pushed back further, but Sam was planning to take the Mayor to court with the evidence they had against him. The Mayor decided the best way out of it would be public support, through a campaign. But how could he do that without his darling children by his side.

While most people definitely had opinions on the situation, everyone was more preoccupied with their homes and families rather than politics.

Everyone was wondering when the heroes would say something. Maybe they were sick of politicians arguing over who would fix the city better, and they wanted to hear from the people that actually saved it.

But George couldn't transform. And Clay couldn't be Dream without his GNotFound. So Sapnap wasn't going to speak alone, and this new guy, Halo, whoever it was, certainly wasn't trusted enough by the city.

But they had to speak soon. Everyone still thought Dream was dead.

"It hasn't been that long." Clay added.

"A week since Doomsday and all you've been doing is hanging out at the hospital." Nick shook his head, but sat down beside him on the park bench. Lorna told him to take Clay out somewhere, so decided a walk for fresh air would be the best idea.

"What happened with George." Nick asked with a sigh, as Clay ran his hands through his hair.

"How did you know something happened with George?" He asked.

"I'm not blind like you both are." Nick rolled his eyes.

"Well, he was practicing with the crutches, and, I don't know... I guess I was helping too much? He got angry at me and said he didn't want me to touch him, and he could walk himself and he wasn't weak. And he told me to fuck off, because he didn't need me." Clay said, feeling the burn in his eyes.

"Oh." Nick said.

*"I don't need anyone to hold me. I don't need help. Can't you just fuck off and leave me be."*

He was being too pushy. He was trying to help George but was probably overstepping. George yelled at him because he was acting like they were boyfriends. They weren't boyfriends. Not yet.

Clay hadn't asked yet.

They had kissed twice, but after the second time, Clay just kissed him on the forehead and cuddled him, nothing else. George was injured, and it felt selfish to think about a relationship while the boy was hurt.

*"I don't need you."*

George was sick of him already. He snapped because Clay was too much. He didn't need Clay. Maybe he didn't even want him.

"I don't know what I did wrong. I was only trying to help." Clay said softly to Nick.

"George isn't the type of person to like help." Nick hummed. "Don't you agree?"

"Well..." He thought about it. George hid his insomnia from everyone, rarely told people if he was having any problems, and absolutely *despised* pity.

*"You know exactly what to do to get them all riled up. Did you do it on purpose?" Clay chuckled. George looked at his friends, who were still yelling like usual, and then back at Clay.*

*"Maybe."*

*"Why?"*

*"I didn't like the looks they were giving me." George said even softer, looking away again. Clay frowned.*

*"What looks?"*

*"Pity."*

"But he needs help. He's hurt." Clay said, chewing his lip

"Yes, but I imagine he's feeling pretty hopeless at the moment, having to rely on people and stay stuck in a hospital where everyone waits on him. George hates being told what to do, and he hates people thinking he's weak."

Clay nodded along.

"And with him liking you, I imagine he probably feels a little embarrassed, being weak in front of someone you love, and want to love you." Nick added.

Clay's heart dropped.

"Being weak after having to be strong for so long." He whispered back, thoughts going to George in the centre of his shield, the Carnelian adding hints of red to his suit. The way the power rippled away from him like he was the centre of the world.

George had to go from being a superhero who saved the day, to a shaky boy who needed crutches.

"He does need you, Clay. He needs you to be there for him when he's not feeling strong. And he wants you to protect him, but not shield him from danger. You need to support him, not treat him like he's fragile and can't do anything." Nick said.

"Thank you, Sap." Clay said, the nickname a little softer, looking at the kind boy before wiping his eyes. "That makes sense, I just... I hate seeing him hurt."

"I know. I'm sure you do. Just remember that he does need you." Nick patted his shoulder again.

"He probably needs you more than those crutches."

•

"Georgie-poo." Drista grinned, opening the front door of the house. He looked at her with narrowed eyes.

"What did you call me?"

"George."

"No you didn't."

"Get inside, idiot. Clay's stress pacing upstairs." Drista said, opening the door wider. Mark was beside George, and watching him carefully as the boy used his crutches to walk into the house.

"Hey, Drista. Where's Lorna? Got some paperwork we have to fill out from the hospital." He said, holding up a folder. Drista pointed towards the kitchen.

George just continued through the hallway towards the stairs, growing more shaky the more nervous he got. He wanted to see Clay so bad. But he was worried the boy would hate him.

He reached the stairs and stared at them, blinking. He went up and down a few steps at the hospital once. But he got the hang of it, so it's fine.

He slowly started walking up, letting go of one forearm crutch to grab the handrail instead.

His muscles started burning after he only went up a few steps. He had to stop, wincing at the pain in his foot and the aches in his legs.

"George." A soft voice from above, and he looked up, still panting slightly.

Clay walked down the stairs so he was one step below George, meeting his eyes, glancing at the crutches and George's shakiness.

"Clay-" He was panting slightly. "I'm so sor-"

"We can talk in your room." Clay interrupted. "Just get up the stairs first." He said gently.

George nodded, and took a deep breath before taking another step up. He didn't miss the way one of Clay's arms shot out behind his back.

He took another few steps, but his foot was killing him, and he looked up to the ceiling while taking a few breaths.

"You ok?" Clay asked quietly. George nodded, before taking another step up, but his hand on the rail slipped slightly, taking him off guard.

Clay immediately gripped his waist, but George had steadied himself.

As quick as Clay had grabbed him, he let go just as fast, and George closed his eyes briefly, before turning to look at the boy.

"It's ok. You can help me." George said quietly, face red in embarrassment.

"You're doing well yourself." Clay offered.

"I'm not. I'm hopeless." George clenched his teeth, looking at the ground. "My foot is going to give out, and my legs are killing me. Can you..." He swallowed. "Can you help me to my room?"

"Of course." Clay looped an arm behind George's back, and held his hand. "Can you take a step?"

"Can you just carry me?" George asked, still not looking at Clay. "Please." He added with a whisper.

Clay nodded, stepping behind George and turning around.

"Piggy back." He said, as George cautiously turned around too, looking at Clay's back.

"Sorry." George said in a whisper, taking off the crutches and holding them in one hand instead.

"Why are you apologising?" Clay asked, feeling George's arms loop around his neck, and seeing the crutches he was holding.

"For being helpless." George mumbled, as Clay reached behind and looped his arms around George's knees, pulling him into his back. George tightened his grip around Clay.

"You're not helpless. And I don't mind helping, you know that." Clay started to walk up the stairs.

George just hummed, pressing his face into Clay's hair.

They reached the room, and Clay sat down on George's bed, the brunette still hugging him.

"There we go. You're welcome for the taxi. That'll be \$26.90." Clay joked, letting go of George's legs.

George didn't move, he just clung to the dirty blonde, head pressing into his neck. Clay chuckled slightly, taking the crutches from George's hold and leaning them against his bedside table.

"Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave the vehicle." Clay joked again, but George just held him tighter.

"George?" Clay asked, hands landing on the boy's shins, tapping them.

There was the faintest sound of a muffled sob, and Clay's smile fell.

"Oh, Georgie." He whispered, grabbing George's hands that were wrapped around his shoulders, and gently pried them off, before turning around to look at the boy.

George didn't lift his head, but Clay just moved George's arms back over his shoulders and pulled him into his lap instead, hugging him tightly around the waist, his other hand coming up to rub

circles into his back.

George had his head pressing into Clay's neck as he tried to hold back his soft cries.

"I'm so sorry." George whispered into his neck.

"It's alright." Clay said back softly. "I'm sorry too."

"I yelled at you. I told you to leave. I didn't mean it. I do need you." George sobbed. "It's so fucking humiliating, but I rely on you too much."

"It's alright, George. You know I'll help you with anything." Clay wanted to cry too, just from seeing George upset.

"I rely on you more than just helping me walk." George whispered, clinging tighter. "I don't think I can function without you. I said to leave me, but please don't. I'd fall apart if you left me." He sobbed.

"I will never leave you, Georgie." Clay blinked away his own tears, and pressed a soft kiss against his cheek.

"I just wish I was better. I don't know why I'm so shaky and weak." George clenched his fists into Clay's shirt in an attempt to stop the shaking. "My muscles hurt all the time, my entire body feels like I could collapse at any moment."

"You'll get better." Clay assured him.

"I was a superhero." George whispered. "I had super strength, super speed. I had a bow with magically-appearing arrows, and goggles for a mask. I had a bright blue shield, and a magical pendent that held my powers." He sobbed. "It's all gone."

"It's not." Clay held him tighter, and closed his eyes. "It's not gone."

"I can't transform. I have crutches, and bandages. I can't even walk upstairs, or type on my phone from my shakiness. I used to jump across buildings, and fight supervillains." George pulled back, and Clay opened his eyes to see George staring at him, cheeks wet and eyes red.

"I'm not a superhero anymore." George choked out a sob. "It used to be my dream, to be myself. But *Dream*, I don't even know who I truly am anymore."

"You're George." Clay brushed George's cheeks with his thumbs, a smile as tears fell down his own face. "*And* you're GNotFound. You can't have one without the other."

"But I can." George reached for his chest, and pulled out the sparkling pendent, not even looking at it, already knowing it still wasn't blank. "GNotFound died along with the city."

"The city is *alive*."

"The city is gone. The city we knew is dead." George clutched his pendent. "So much is about to change."

"Good." Clay leaned his forehead against George's, and closed his eyes, feeling George's light breaths against his face. "Change is good."

"Not all the time." George's Sapphire felt cold.

Clay grabbed George's hand, gently peeling it off the pendent and intertwining their fingers.

"I think most of the time." Clay whispered. George looked down at their hands.

Clay's hand felt warm.

Clay lifted his hand to his lips and pressed a gentle kiss to the back of it.

"Would you still like me even if I won't ever be GNotFound again." George asked, and Clay pulled back immediately, staring at him with wide eyes and an open jaw.

"George." He said, and the brunette looked down. "What kind of a question is that?"

"You liked GNotFound first." He mumbled.

"That's you, idiot." Clay grabbed his shoulders. "You're smart and stubborn and strong and incredible, with or without your powers, and whether you are hurt or not. I fell in love with you twice, because I love you for you."

"Even without the powers?" George asked.

Clay sighed and lifted George's chin so he was forced to look at him.

"You'll always be GNotFound. You don't need powers. I don't know how many ways I can say it. I love you, George. I love you for who you are, I don't care what you wear or how fast you can run." Clay shook his head. "I." He kissed him on the cheek. "Love." He kissed the other cheek. "You." He kissed him on the nose.

George's cheeks were bright red, and he couldn't hold back a small smile as he squirmed away from Clay.

"Thanks Clay." He said softly, and Clay pulled him into a hug once more.

"You'll always be GNotFound in my eyes, whether you're transformed or not. And you'll always be George even if do. I love you for you. Your secret identity doesn't change that." Clay said, rocking them both slightly in the embrace.

George took a deep breath, closing his eyes and melting into the hug.

"You're incredible." Clay whispered.

George huffed at that.

"And smart."

"Stop." George scoffed

"And beautiful."

"Clay."

"And Super."

George's smile fell slightly, feeling the pendent on his chest.

"I don't know about that one." He whispered.

"George." Clay sighed, digging his chin into George's shoulder. "How many times do I have to tell you?"

Clay squeezed him tightly, relishing in the warmth of George, the quiet sound of his heart beat, the feeling of his breath dusting his neck. He was alive, and embracing him, and he's not going anywhere. He was safe. They both were.

"You don't need superpowers to be Super." He whispered.

•

"Hello?" Clay answered his phone, stopping swinging the chair he was on.

"Is this Clay Block?" A man's voice was on the other end, and Clay squinted at trying to recognise it.

"Who's asking?"

"It's Sam Warden." He said, and Clay blinked.

"Oh. Uh. Hi, yes, it's Clay."

"Wonderful. I know you and your sister must still be recovering from Doomsday, like everyone else. But I was just calling to let you know that you both will most likely be called as witnesses by either us or your father at his trial, about his electoral fraud, and stealing and whatnot. I understand your relationship with him is a bit rocky at the moment, and I can't tell you exactly how to feel, but we are hoping to put him behind bars. However these accusations won't do it for long. If there was anything you wanted to add to the case, then we can give him more time in jail."

Clay didn't say anything, his mouth was open to respond but he was still processing.

"I know he's your father, you don't have to do anything more. But his defence attorney may call you up to defend him. I don't know what you know about what he's done, but our lawyers may try to get you as well. What were your thoughts about that?"

Clay took a shaky breath, and it made Nick look over, who was also sitting in the chair of the small room.

"I..." Clay didn't know what to say or do.

"I know it would be hard to go against your own father. Do you want to see him in jail?"

"I don't... I don't know." Clay's hands were both trembling now, and Nick came over, taking the phone from Clay.

"Hello, this is Nick, Clay's friend." He said, while Clay clenched and unclenched his hands. They were tingly.

Nick was silent for a while while Sam explained something to him. Clay could hear the slight buzzing from the phone, but kept his eyes closed while he tried to remain calm. He was already on edge today.

"I think calling up a teenager, telling them their father may be going to prison, and then trying to convince him to just help your side is a bit manipulative. That's his father, and you don't know what Clay feels, but trying to get him on your side already without him even seeing any of your



evidence is stupid. Clay will call you." Nick then hung up the phone and switched it off, dragging his chair over to sit next to Clay.

Clay shook his head, looking at Nick.

"I'm fine. Sorry." He laughed, shaking out his hands.

"You sure? That was honestly ridiculous. I want to your your dad behind bars as much as Sam seems to. But I wouldn't go out of my way to call you to try and get more evidence against the man."

"I just don't want to even see father again. I've been so much happier." Clay said.

"Exactly." Nick reached out and gripped Clay's forearm. "No need to stress extra by having to see him, and be involved in a trial and accusing him of stuff."

"Yeah, but..." Clay took a deep breath. "Maybe that's exactly why I should. Get him as far away from me and Drista as possible."

"Clay, you don't have to do anything you don't want to do." Nick said with worried eyes.

"I may be called as a witness regardless, since I'm close to him." Clay swallowed. "I can help their case... I can tell them what he's done."

"You don't know anything about the stealing and blackmailing though, you can't help either." Nick said.

"No, but..." Clay's hand went to his cheek, where a faint scar was still slightly bumpy and pink.

"I have other evidence."

There was a knock at the door, and both boys jumped at the sound.

"It's just me." Phil said through the door. "Transform."

Clay and Nick both transformed into their hero selves. Clay flexed his fingers, looking at the Emerald.

Nick stood up and walked over to the door, unlocking it to let the man in. But Phil was followed inside by a person draped head to toe in black with hints of red, and Nick jumped away, and Clay stood up.

"Boys, calm." Phil said, shutting the door behind himself.

"Hi Dream! And Sapnap! It's great to meet you both, gosh you are both so cool and you did incredible work at Doomsday. And the whole past year and a bit!" The new hero said, smiling a toothy grin.

"Halo." Sapnap said slowly, glancing between him and Phil wearily. "Right?"

"It's actually BadBoyHalo. Because originally when I transformed to help people on Doomsday, everyone assumed I was a villain. Even though I'm not. But I thought it was funny, so my name is now BadBoyHalo." He said cheerily.

"Even though you're.... *not*... a bad boy." Clay said, crossing his arms over his chest, eyes flicking to the Ruby.

"Exactly." BadBoyHalo said.

"You said he wasn't keeping the Ruby." Sapnap said to Phil.

"He's not. But he is who is going to use the Ruby when we interrogate Blade. I thought it would be a good idea for him to introduce himself to you two." Phil said.

"Is he going to be on the news with us now?" Clay asked.

"I was considering it. It could be good for the city to know him." Phil said.

"Why? Blade's gone. The city is fine. Why do they need to know who he is?" Clay said, turning to the new hero with daggers in his eyes.

"There's always things to be done in this city." Phil said. "You may need his help in the future."

"We don't need him. We have me, Sap and G." Clay said, still glaring at BadBoyHalo.

"GNotFound can't transform. And you can never have too much help." Phil said.

Clay then turned to Phil, hands clenching. Sapnap also looked furious at those words.

"G can't transform because he sacrificed himself for this city. He *will* be able to. You can't just replace him with this amateur!" Clay gestured at him.

"I could never replace GNotFound." BadBoyHalo said nervously.

"I can't transform anymore, after I combined gems." Phil said, looking at Clay. "I'm not replacing GNotFound, but we can't forget that there is a chance he may not ever transform again either."

Clay stormed forward and grabbed Phil by the scruff of his collar, pushing him against the wall and glaring at him.

"Dream." Sapnap pulled him off, dragging him away from Phil, holding him back.

"G is stronger than you." Clay spat. "You're a coward, Phil. Hiding behind teenagers and not even being able to see that your own son was the one who tore apart the city. You're a fucking awful person, you know that."

Clay never used to have anything against the man. He was thankful for his jewel, and loved the freedom. But Phil did questionable things, like not giving them a choice, or guidance, and convincing George the only way to protect himself and his identity is to give up his civilian life.

"G will heal." Clay pulled away from Sapnap, but didn't attack Phil again. He just stood there, glaring at him. "No thanks to you."

Phil had his lips pursed, staring right back at Clay for several moments. Before he just simply nodded.

"I regret a lot of things." Phil said softly.

"Good. I hope one of them is everything you've done to G." Clay said, and then walked towards the door, slamming it open. He paused to take a deep breath.

"Let's just get this over with."

•

George was sat on the couch in the living room, with Lexi and Drista to his right, and both his parents on the other couch.

"What did they say this was about again?" Drista asked.

"We don't know. It was just an important announcement for all citizens at 8pm today." Mark responded, flicking to the correct channel, which at the moment was just displaying ads.

George was extra shaky today, with nerves. He knew what this was about. He would be there if he was able to transform.

The family sat in silence for a few minutes, and George assumed the entire city was anxiously waiting.

When the ads finally stopped playing, and the screen switched to one at the news station, both the girls beside him cheered and his parents were smiling.

Dream and Sapnap were on screen, and George's heart ached at the reminder he couldn't be there.

Because it wasn't just the two of them. There was a third person beside him.

"Who the fuck is that." George said, eyes wide as he immediately recognised the bright earring. *There's a villain. He's manipulated Clay and Nick and hijacked the news.*

"Hi, everyone. I know it's been a while since we last spoke to you. I can confirm now that I am in fact alive. Blade's alert that he sent out was a lie." Dream said.

"That's the hero who helped out on Doomsday when the other three disappeared. He was mostly just helping people get out of their homes and to a hospital if they needed." Lorna said, and George was confused.

Phil had given over the Ruby already. Why had no one told him?

"I know there's a lot of confusion about what happened at Doomsday. We are sorry for not talking to you earlier, we've needed some time to recover, like you." Dream said.

"Some more than others." Sapnap said, and George noticed Clay swallow.

"GNotFound is alright too. He's still recovering as well, so that's why he isn't here today." He said, a little tense.

"But, we do have someone else here who helped out at Doomsday for you all to formally meet." Sapnap said, hand on the new hero's shoulder.

"Oh, gosh. Hi!" The guy said, and George's jaw tensed. "I'm BadBoyHalo. I know I sort of came out of nowhere, and I have similar colours to Blade, with his jewel, but I assure you, I am only here to help."

"Help with what." George seethed through his teeth. Lexi looked at him.

"Don't you like him? I think he seems quite sweet." She said.

"Who the hell is he." George muttered.

"As many of you have guessed, and now it is confirmed." Dream gestured at BadBoyHalo's earring. "We defeated the Blade."

"He is currently in custody and while we know his identity, we will not be sharing it with you all just yet." Sapnap said.

"Why not? Who the hell was it?" Drista said.

"Doomsday was a lot. My heart goes out to everyone who lost someone they love. And it goes out to those still recovering in hospitals, or at home. I am sorry for the homes you have lost, and the confusion you all must have felt." Dream said solemnly.

"The blue that touched the city that day was what took down the Blade and took away all of his control. GNotFound enhanced his shield to do it, at the expense of himself. He's not with us right now because he was severely hurt." Sapnap said.

"But he's ok, and I promise that he will return to greet you all himself soon." Dream said.

George leaned back in the chair, eyes down. *Clay can't say that. He doesn't know that. He can't promise it.*

"This isn't the first time this city has been hit hard. The first Doomsday had similar destruction. We've done it before, and we can do it again. I know we can fix the city and things will return to normal again." Sapnap said.

"It will take time, but if everyone works together and helps each other, then I know we can return to how it was before." Dream said.

The green hero smiled to himself, glancing at the floor briefly as he seemingly chuckled to himself, before looking back at the camera.

"G has always had hope in this city. He said to me, a long time ago in a meeting with the Mayor, *regular people can be powerful if they put their mind to it.* And it's true. We can."

George sat up straight again, staring at the screen with wide eyes.

"Just before Doomsday began, I said something to one of most incredible people I know, and that same person repeated it to all of you later that day."

George felt like Clay was looking straight at him.

"You don't need superpowers to be Super." Dream smiled. "You can make a difference with or without a magical jewel and some dumb costume and fake name."

"But that doesn't mean *we* aren't going to help." Sapnap chimed in, and Dream nodded.

"Of course. There may not be anymore Blade, but we will always be here to protect this city. From anything that attacks it, and from itself." He said.

"You are all stuck with us forever." Sapnap said, and while his mouth was hidden, his eyes showed he was clearly grinning.

"But from all of us, including G. We want to thank you all for the support. Remembering who we were protecting, and knowing that you believed in us was a big part in helping us go on, even when we thought we were going to lose." Dream said.

George wished he was there. He wanted to say things too. He wanted to talk to the city, show them he was fine. But he couldn't. His hand went to his chest, feeling the pendent.

"I'm sure we will talk soon." Dream said, glancing at Sapnap and BadBoyHalo briefly before looking back at the camera. "But I guess, for now, this is goodbye."

George stood up and left the room, hand clutching the pendent through his shirt so tightly.

He never thought he'd miss being a hero.

"Mask on." He whispered.

Nothing

•

"George what the fuck are you doing here, it's late." Nick said, immediately grabbing George and pulling him into a hug.

"I need your help." George said after hugging his friend back.

"With what?" Nick asked.

"You can't say no immediately." George said, and Nick raised his eyebrows, crossing his arms and leaning against the doorway.

"It's going to be stupid, isn't it?"

"Maybe."

"And that's why you're coming to me instead of Clay."

"He wouldn't even let me out of the house if he knew what I wanted to do." George said.

Nick scoffed, and nodded.

"Alright. Let's hear it." Nick sighed.

"I need you to take me to the police station to talk to Techno. They won't let me in as George, and I can't transform." He said.

Nick's expression didn't change, he just went silent for a minute.

"You're an idiot."

"Please, Nick?" George begged.

"Why?" Nick said. "Why would you want to see him?"

"I have questions. About everything."

"We are doing the official questioning once you're better. With Bad using the manipulation to make Blade say the truth." Nick said.

"Bad?" George asked, furrowed eyebrows.

"BadBoyHalo. The new hero. Bad's just easier to say." Nick shrugged.

"Whatever. I can't wait that long. I may never get better and-"

"Don't say that, George. You will." Nick said. George waved it off.

"I don't care. I want to see him now. I have nothing else to do but sit on my ass or hobble around on my crutches. Please let me see him. What's the worst that could happen? It's not like he can use his powers on me." George said.

"I'm not worried about you getting physically hurt. I just think maybe you should have some space from him. That guy tormented your life for the past 18 months."

"That's why I want to see him." George gritted his teeth.

Nick pursed his lips, staring at his friend.

"Clay will kill me."

"That's never stopped you from doing anything before." George pointed out. "I told you to stay away from the fight and you came bounding in with your axe and nearly died for it."

"And I didn't. In fact, I saved the day. Multiple times, so you're welcome." Nick said.

George stared at him.

"I do appreciate that." He said softly.

"I know." Nick smiled.

"I just didn't want you to get hurt. I took your Diamond because I couldn't stand the thought of my best friend-" George had to stop and swallow to avoid tearing up. Nick put a hand on his shoulder.

"I would have done the same." He said, and George smiled back.

"Alright. Fine. I will take you to the cells and get you in, but only if you promise not to tell Clay. And you stop walking around instead of resting." Nick said.

"Deal. I'll even add in an icecream for you." George said.

"One for Karl too?"

"Sure."

"Alright. Then let's go, Gogy." Nick grinned.

•

"I thought they were going to question why I was with you more." George whispered to Nick, as they were escorted through the halls.

"Me too. I didn't think they would respect me as much as you or Dream, but I guess they do." Nick whispered back. George's crutches were echoing with each step.

"Would you like security in with you?" The officer asked Sapnap, who scoffed and shook his head.

"I think I can handle it if he starts getting rowdy." He said. The officer nodded, glancing at George.

"And he's here, because..?"

"Personally targeted by Blade. Just wants to see him locked up. I won't let him get close, promise." Sapnap said. The officer nodded, before unlocking the room.

Sapnap went in first, and George followed.

Techno was sitting on a chair, handcuffed to a metal table. Well, only one hand was handcuffed. His other hadn't healed or returned. The arm had been tied against his torso. He looked awful. Exhausted, angry. And he was shooting daggers from his eyes at Sapnap.

But when George came into view, his eyes turned into amusement.

George watched the officer lock them in, before turning back to look at Techno.

"You survived." Techno said, voice as monotone as ever.

"Are you surprised?" George asked.

"Yes. But I can see you're awfully weak." Techno looked him up and down, noting the crutches, and the shakiness in his hands. He laughed. "And you're here... to see me locked up?" Techno said. George didn't respond. "To yell at me? Mock me?"

Techno looked at George's shirt, seeing a slight bump beneath it, and he grinned.

"No. You want to know when you'll be able to transform again." He chuckled lowly.

"You did the same thing I did years ago. You used the Carnelian to enhance your manipulation to control the minds of so many people at once, at the first Doomsday. Phil did the same, but he combined the precious jewels. He can't transform anymore, but you..." George looked at the man who looked too normal without his mask.

"How long did it take for me to transform again, *GNotFound*? Hm? Do you know." Techno said.

George nodded. He did know.

"Three years. There's a reason I didn't attack the city for that long. I couldn't. I was like you. Exactly like you. Weak, shaky, the Ruby didn't even recognise me."

"But villains were coming *two* years after Doomsday I. Me and Dream had to fight people who weren't even manipulated. They weren't manipulated until a year after they first appeared." George said.

"Mm." Techno nodded. "People can be easily persuaded. I never told them my identity, just anonymously gave them jewels and told them if they caused havoc and took your jewels, then I would reward them with money."

"And did you?"

"Well none of them succeeded." Blade scoffed. "I wonder who's fault that was." He stared at George.

"But you couldn't transform for three years?" He asked, swallowing.

Techno just laughed. For a whole minute. George just stood there, feeling more and more helpless.

"But you used the Carnelian for hours. I only used it for minutes. It won't take three years. Right." George said.

"You're a kid." Techno barked a laugh. "You're small and weak and young. And you didn't know how to use the Carnelian properly. You shielded the entire city instantly with the most power you could at once, because you were angry. I preserved my power. You wasted it, and nearly killed your weak body in the process."

George looked over at Sapnap, who had furrowed eyebrows, staring back at him.

"Why did you even do it?" George asked quietly, turning back to Techno, who raised an eyebrow.

"You think I'm just going to tell you?"

"You told me all that other stuff." George said.

"Because it's hilarious. You come in here weak and injured and shaky, expecting good news from me. GNotFound died on Doomsday. You should get used to it." Techno said.

"We will just get the information out of you at the proper interrogation. We will use your own Ruby against you." Sapnap interrupted, walking over so he was beside George, who was looking at the ground.

"I don't think that's a good idea, *Nick*." Techno laughed. "Nothing is stopping me from exposing all of you. I know your identities."

"But you haven't yet." Sapnap said. Techno shrugged, hands twisting slightly so the chain clicked against the metal table.

"But I will. I will if you try to manipulate me." He said.

"So? You'll be locked up, there's no one after us and our jewels. You can tell the city, it won't put us in danger." Sapnap said.

George furrowed his eyebrows. He wasn't so sure about that.

"There always people who want the jewels. All four precious ones. You aren't safe." Techno pointed out.

"No one is powerful enough to take them." Sapnap argued back.

"What is it about the four jewels that you were so desperate for? What do they do?" George asked, looking back up at Techno.

Techno shrugged again, smirk on his face.

"Just tell me. It's useless for you now." George said, clenching his jaw.

"Why? I don't care. You'll just ask me again when you manipulate me." Techno scoffed.

"So just tell us now." Sapnap said.

Techno said nothing.

"I will transform again. Soon. And we will come and ask you everything, every single little secret you have, and we'll expose you to the entire city." George said, taking another step forward. Sapnap put an arm out to stop him from getting too close.

"You won't." Techno shrugged.



George blinked.

"Because I'll tell the city that GNotFound is George Davidson. And Sapnap is Nick Armstrong. And Dream is Clay Block. And Liberator is... Phil Za." Techno's hesitation was only slight, but George noticed.

"Again, we don't care." Sapnap said.

George did care.

GNotFound and George were the same person, but they were different lives for him. He could be someone different. While he used to hate being GNotFound, for a while he even hated being George. But the thought of both of those blending, without being able to escape either made him feel slightly ill.

And Clay. He's expressed multiple times that Dream was an escape for him, from his father, from his life. All that being torn down after ages of relying on it would be a shock.

"I think you do care." Techno said, staring at George. "Wow, it is a lot easier to read what you are thinking without those ugly goggles."

George didn't know what to do.

"I won't tell the world who you are, if you interrogate me like a normal criminal." Techno proposed.

"You don't deserve that, after what you did." Sapnap spat.

"What about a lesser sentence?" George asked quietly.

"George." Sapnap said sternly.

"I'm not promising anything. But what if, in exchange for not telling everyone who we are, you get a slightly lesser sentence." George said.

"Not worth it." Techno said, but it was clear George had his attention. "I'm in prison for life."

"And that would suck, wouldn't it." George pouted. "Rotting in jail."

"How much time would you offer." Techno said between gritted teeth.

"We are leaving." Sapnap grabbed George's arm and tugged.

"Nick." George seethed, still staring at Techno.

"George, I don't care. We are leaving now. Come on." He said, and George slowly limped backwards from Techno.

"Till next time, George Davidson." He said.

"Next time I'll be GNotFound." George gritted his teeth, and followed Sapnap out of the room, the officer locking it behind them once again.

It was difficult for Nick to drag a boy on crutches out of the station, but he still managed.

"Nick, chill." George panted when they left. Nick shook his head, picking George up completely and jumping up onto a roof, going to a higher one, and then setting him down.

"Are you out of your mind?" Nick asked, pulling out his phone to see it already buzzing.

"I don't want the city to know who I am." George said, but Nick just put up a finger to silence him, and then answered the phone.

"Clay, chill. I've got him." Nick said, and George closed his eyes with a sigh.

"At the station."

George's eyes snapped open, and he limped closer to Nick, glaring at him. Nick just raised his eyebrows at George.

"Yep. You got it."

"Put him on speaker." George seethed. Nick shrugged but obeyed.

"You actually took him to see Techno!" Clay was yelling through the phone.

"I did. Do I regret it? Yes. I forgot how much of idiot your stupid boyfriend is." Nick scoffed.

George froze at that.

Boyfriend.

They were, right? Well, neither of them have *asked*... but that's almost what they are. Clay hasn't kissed him since he woke up though.

*Oh God*, George's overthinking began again.

Clay didn't answer for a moment, until he cleared his throat.

"Bring him home now."

"You're not my Mom." George responded.

"Fine. Don't come home then." And Clay hung up.

George stared at the phone, Nick just as shocked, slowly pocketing the phone before looking at George, who just swallowed and stood up straight.

"Um. Yeah. Take me home." He said softly. Nick's eyes softened.

"He's not mad at you." He said, before picking the boy up.

"Did you not hear that?"

"He's mad at *me* for taking you. He's just scared for you, he didn't know where you were, and to find out you were with the enemy while you're still vulnerable and without him, he is just worried."

"He said don't come home." George whispered, tightening his grip as Nick jumped over a large gap.

"He's dramatic. And frustrated. And worried and anxious. He could never be mad at you, Gogy." Nick said.

"He is. He also isn't my boyfriend yet."

"Wait, what?" Nick asked.

"He hasn't asked. I haven't asked him. We haven't kissed since I woke up. He said he loves me and that doesn't matter if I can't transform again. But why hasn't he asked? Does he not want to be in a relationship with me?"

"You're a fucking idiot, you know that? Stop overthinking. He's obviously trying to be a gentlemen and wait for you to get better." Nick rolled his eyes.

"But what if-"

"No. I swear to God, I've not waited this long for you two to get together just to here your stupid little overthinking mind ruin it for me. Chill out. He's so fucking whipped and so are you."

"Sap." His name was called, and Nick skidded to a stop, turning to the right. Dream was there, on the building over.

"Thought you were going to wait at home." Nick called out. Clay shrugged, jumping over to meet them, eyes clearly only on George.

"I was worried you were going to listen to what I said."

George looked down.

Sapnap put George carefully on his feet, before standing up straight.

"I'm going home. I'll see you two idiots later." Sapnap said, hitting the two of them on the shoulder before turning and jumping away.

George and Clay were quiet for a long moment. George was looking at the ground, because he could feel Clay's intense stare on him.

"I don't know why I said that on the phone. I was just really scared. I didn't know where you were when I got home, and Nick said you went to the station to visit Techno. I'm just so scared all the time about losing you. I lashed out, I'm sorry George." Clay said.

George looked up.

"It's ok."

"Why did you even go?" Clay asked, reaching out to grab one of George's hands.

"He transformed after using the Carnelian with his jewel." George said softly.

"Oh." Clay frowned. "Oh, George. You know you were both entirely different circumstances right? Just because it took him a while-"

"Can we not talk about it?" George whispered. He knew he should probably tell Clay about what Techno threatened and what George suggested, but he didn't want to make him more upset.

Clay pursed his lips and nodded, grabbing George's other hand too.

"Mask off."

"What are you doing?" George said, staring at the dirty blonde in front of him. Clay shrugged.

"I like feeling the breeze on my face." Clay said, tugging George closer. The brunet stared at his eyes, seeing the stars reflecting in them.

"You're pretty." Clay said, one hand rising to brush a wild piece of hair behind George's ears.

"So are you." George said, memorising each and every freckle that covered Clay's nose and cheeks. The ones usually hidden by his mask when he was Dream.

Clay's hand that was near George's face fell to his waist, and the one holding his hand brought it out to their side, and he tugged him closer.

"Dance with me, Georgie." Clay said softly.

"What?" George asked, eyes still on Clay's face. "There's no music."

"I don't care." He twisted George around carefully. "Dance." He smiled. George hesitantly lifted his free hand to rest on Clay's shoulder.

"You know I can't dance." George said, laughing slightly. Clay pulled George along, guiding him around the empty rooftop in the middle of the city, careful of his legs.

*"I've got you."* Clay whispered, letting go of George's hand so both his hands rested on the shorter boy's waist. George let his hands rest behind Clay's neck.

It was just the two of them, under the darkness of the sky and in the light of a healing city. Dream and GNotFound danced, and Clay and George dreamed.

Clay held George close, the both of them moving softly and carefully. But unlike at prom, George didn't feel a suffocating dread in his chest. Nothing bad was going to happen. All his moments were usually interrupted. But this time was different. This was just for them.

"You're so special, George." Clay whispered. George blushed and tried to hide his smile, but he couldn't help it when he saw Clay's own beaming grin as he looked down in such adoration

"Special?" George repeated, teasing.

"So special." Clay whispered, with a content smile on his face. He lifted a hand to touch George's cheek, the back of his fingers brushing down towards his chin, where his index finger traced up the side of his face.

George had already memorised the fiery trail that Clay has etched onto his face before. Clay was learning him, memorising him, loving him.

George smiled and stood on his tip-toes, hovering his lips just above Clay's, making the dirty blonde cup his jaw instinctively.

George paused, just before their lips touched, smiling with his eyes closed, feeling Clay's hand on his waist tighten slightly in anticipation.

"Are you going to kiss me?" Clay asked, inching forward slightly, but George kept the minuscule gap with a smile.

"Me? No. That would be impulsive." George whispered back, and Clay's grip tightened on George's jaw.

"And you're not impulsive." Clay whispered. George shook his head ever so slightly.

"Course not." He breathed out.

"Good thing I am."

Clay closed the gap, softly pressing his lips against George, and simultaneously pulling the boy closer by his waist. One of George's hands rose to Clay's hair, tugging on it as they kissed in the moonlight and beneath the stars.

George doesn't think he could ever get over the way Clay kissed, and how he tasted. How gentle his hands were and how soft were his lips. He felt complete every time.

He loved kissing him, but he loved seeing Clay's face and hearing him talk even more. He loved hugging the boy, and hearing him laugh, seeing him smile. He loved dancing with him, and holding his hand, and just being with him.

So when George pulled away, he immediately hugged him, burying his face into Clay's chest. The blonde squeezed him back just as tight, his cheek pressing against the top of George's head.

"Be my boyfriend." Clay said, and George froze, pulling away slightly to look up at him. Clay was smiling, and pushed George's hair out of his face again.

"Is that a question or a demand?" George said, but he was grinning now.

"A demand. I believe I *asked* a long time ago for you to be my boyfriend, and you said, and I quote: *No. I'd rather die. I will never, ever be your boyfriend.*"

George hit Clay on the chest with a scoff.

"You're lying."

"I'm not. You said it." Clay laughed, and then kissed George on the forehead. "But I'm serious. I know it took us a while to get here, and I feel like we are already something more, but I want to do this right. Will you be my boyfriend, Georgie?" He asked, meeting George's eyes.

"No. I'd rather die. I will never *ever*- no Clay! No!" He squealed when Clay attacked his sides, his most ticklish area. "Dream!" He screamed, and nearly fell to the floor. Clay was laughing manically, and pulled George down to the floor with him, still tickling his sides.

George tried to curl up into a ball to avoid Clay's hands, but the dirty blonde was ruthless, despite George's pained laughs and screams to stop.

"Ok! Ok! Yes!" He yelled, and Clay stopped, pulling George's head into his lap, looking down with a grin.

"Yes?" Clay said. George was panting, but smile.

"Yes, I'll be your boyfriend. Idiot." George said, and Clay beamed, leaning down and kissing him again, much more gentler than the tickling.

Clay pulled back, tracing George's face with his fingers again, marvelling the smile on his face and the stars in his eyes.

Clay traced an outline for goggles, and smirked slightly.

"I always knew you'd fall for me, G."

One more chapter to go....

I really don't want this to end. I could drag it out forever if I wanted but it's already been going on long enough and they deserve their ending.

Here is some fluff. Of course, with a sprinkle of angst to make it more deserving. I hope the fluff is to your liking though, you all know I'm better at angst writing.

Next chapter might make me cry just from it being the last one. We shall see.

Love you all so much <3

And I will be publishing my new book a few weeks after this one finishes. I was going to do it the same day Super finished, but I've been updating this every single week for over a year and I need a little break from writing. A month sounds good, and will give me time to pre-write more chapters.

User subscribe to me here or follow me on Twitter (@/LottiaraT) to know when I release my new story

(Royalty with a splash of high school, multi chap but not as long as this obviously, weekly updates)

(also have a kidfic and a divergent au coming soon)

# Super

## Chapter Summary

The end of a story, all loose ends are tied, trials are conducted, decisions are made, and graduations are held.

It's been a Super long journey

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Something's wrong with me." George said, poking the beanbag.

"Well, you're injured." Puffy responded, watching the boy carefully. "Of course there's some things wrong, but you'll get better."

"No." George shook his head. "I mean I still can't sleep. I don't get it, half my problems are gone, I literally have no other commitments. I have so much free time." George swallowed and looked down. "Everyone thinks my sleep is fixed."

"Still the insomnia? You know it's not just going to magically go away." Puffy said. George shrugged.

"I don't know why I thought it would. Blade's in jail, I can't even transform if I wanted too. I have the time, and I'm so exhausted, and injured. But no. I can't sleep unless Clay is with me, and even then, the sleep isn't good, I wake up constantly." George sighed. "And Clay says I say *Mask on* in my sleep now."

"Can you think of why your sleep is bad?" Puffy asked.

"Nightmares. Still." George said softly. "They won't go away."

"And they probably won't for a while." Puffy leaned back, watching him. "Have you taken your sleep meds?"

"No. But, ok, listen." George saw her narrowed eyes. "I was in a small coma. And my brain and body is all broken, I'm worried they would put me to sleep, and I'd never wake up." He said.

"Did you Doctor say if they were ok to take?" Puffy asked.

George chewed on his lip and nodded.

"You've been through so much for someone your age, George. I can see why you have nightmares, and have trouble sleeping. Just because some of your problems are solved, even if *every* single thing was, your body needs time to catch up. And your mind needs time to rest. You need to sleep." Puffy said.

"I know." He said softly.

"Don't you wonder why you can't transform?" She then asked, and George looked down at his chest, seeing the small lump for his Sapphire.

"Of course, but I think I'm just broken." He said.

"Or you just need to recover." She said, a small smile.

"I am recovering. But it's taking forever. I swear I haven't improved." He put his hands out, the shakiness evident. "Mask on." He said again.

Nothing happened.

"Do you know what the number one best thing for recovery is?" Puffy asked.

George pursed his lips, tapping his fingers on his knee.

"Don't make me say it." He muttered.

"But you know what it is?" She asked gently. "I know you have your fears and anxieties, but you have to push through. You said you can sleep a bit with Clay. Let him help you. *Tell* him about your issues." She said.

"He has so much going on too. We have the trial tomorrow, school is back on Monday and we have exams in a week." George said.

"How upset would he be if he found out you didn't tell him you were struggling too?" Puffy said, and George nodded.

"I'll tell him. He deserves to know. He... he cares about me." George said, and Puffy grinned, standing up and walking over, and giving him a hug.

"You've come so far, George." She said, as George hugged her back, a little awkward on the beanbag.

"I have?" He asked as she pulled away.

"Yes. From the boy who first walked into this office. The one who kept all his problems to himself, wouldn't even talk to his best friends about his struggles, hated being both himself and his other identity, and couldn't even recognise when he wasn't doing ok. To now." She gestured at him. "You're hurt, yes, but you're the strongest I've ever seen you."

"Thank you. Puffy. For everything." He said earnestly.

"Anytime, George. And what is the best way to recover?" She asked, crossing her arms over her chest and looking at him with one raised eyebrow.

"Sleep." George mumbled, rolling his eyes, but had a smile on his face.

"Which I'd argue has been one of the biggest antagonists in your life." Puffy added with a chuckle.

•

"Calling Clay Block to the stand."

Clay didn't move, his hands were balled into fists against his pants, he felt paralysed.



Until a soft touch on one of them made him look to his left. George was looking at him, soft eyes and pursed lips, giving him a nod.

"I'll be right here." He whispered, and Clay nodded before standing up, feeling his heart beating in his chest, and the eyes of everyone in the room on him.

He walked past his sister, who gave his hand a quick squeeze that he barely felt, as he walked to the aisle.

"Follow me." The Bailiff said, turning and walking over to the witness stand, Clay following.

His dress shoes were squeaking on the floor as he walked through the echoing courtroom. He fiddled with the buttons on his blazer that felt much too tight. Clay was staring straight ahead, purposefully avoiding looking anywhere near the defence council and the defendant.

"Do you affirm that the evidence you will give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" The Bailiff asked him when they reached the front of the room.

"I do." Clay managed to say.

"Please be seated." The man said, and Clay stepped into the witness box, sitting down in the chair, thankful it was before his knees gave out.

"Please state your name for the record." The prosecutor attorney said to him, after standing up and walking in front of everyone seated, looking at him.

Clay looked up beside him, seeing the judge, and he looked to his left, seeing the jury all watching him curiously. He looked back at the prosecuting team, where Sam was sitting at the front table, giving him a small smile.

But he looked beyond them, making eye contact with George, who just nodded slightly.

Clay took a deep breath.

"Clay Block."

"Good afternoon Mr Block." The attorney said. His name was Luke Punz. Clay only had a few conversations with him, about what he was going to be asked specifically by him and to consider his responses beforehand. How they were going to bring up evidence, and how he has to act in court. He also prepared him for the questions he may be asked by the defence team.

"Good afternoon." Clay responded, voice clearly very shaky.

"Can you please state your relationship to the defendant." Punz said, gesturing to the other side of the room, where the defence council sat.

Clay didn't look over.

"David Block is my father." Clay said, looking at the microphone in his face.

"Do you know what the defendant is being accused of?" Punz asked.

"Yes. David Block is being accused of electoral fraud, extortion, security fraud, blackmail, felony theft and tax fraud." Clay said slowly, careful to remember everything.

"Do you believe the defendant is guilty of some or all of these charges?"

"Yes. I have reason to believe he is guilty of all of them."

"Why do you have reason to believe the defendant is guilty?"

"I've known David Block my whole life, he is exactly the type of person I would believe to have done these."

"Did you have any knowledge of these actions the defendant is being accused of while it was occurring?" Punz asked.

"No. I did not know anything David Block was doing, but we went from having no money to suddenly having a lot, moving cities and him becoming Mayor. I thought it was suspicious, but I had no knowledge of anything he had done." Clay said. This was ok. He knew Punz would ask these questions, he was prepared.

"What made you be suspicious of the defendant?"

"He's the type of person to do it. Ever since my mother died, he's turned into a cold, and untrustworthy man. He's always been focused on business and money, and didn't want to care for his children." Clay said, clenching and unclenching his fists.

"What was your relationship like with the defendant?" Punz asked.

"It has never been healthy. It got worse when mother died. He didn't care, he never wanted to spend time with us. He would dismiss me, not listen to me." Clay took a deep breath. "He would yell at me."

"Why did David Block yelled at you?" Punz asked.

"Objection, relevance." The defense attorney stood up.

"Your response?" The judge spoke to Punz.

"Your honour, understanding what the defendant's behaviour is like behind closed doors may correlate with behaviours associated with the charges." Punz responded calmly.

"Overruled." The judge said to the defence attorney, who tensed his jaw, but sat down.

Punz turned back to Clay, nodding his head.

"I don't know why he yelled at me, I never did anything wrong. I had good grades, I was scared to talk back, I didn't rebel." Clay said, still not looking over at his father, who he was hyper aware of in the room.

"Was him yelling a common occurrence?"

"Yes. Anytime I spoke with him."

"Would he do anything else along with yelling?"

Clay swallowed, fingernails digging into his thighs.

"Yes. Sometimes, he..." He took a deep breath. "He would throw things at me."

"What would he throw?"

"Anything he could grab. Pencils, rubbish. He once..." Clay's hand subconscious lifted to his forehead. "He once threw a mug at me, and I went to hospital for stitches in my forehead. And he threw a glass pencil holder at my face, causing a scar." He touched his cheek.

He heard murmurs throughout the court, and the judge banged their gavel.

"Order." She said, and everyone calmed down.

"Did he ever cause harm to you in other ways?"

"Yes. He would... he would hit me sometimes with his hands, or kick me. He shoved a couch against me the other week, pinning me to the wall and causing a large bruise on my hip. He kicked me out of the house that day." Clay said.

"Did he ever do the same to your sister, Drista Block?"

"I wouldn't let him, I let him take any anger out on me. I could never see her hurt." Clay looked over at the gallery and saw his sister crying silently, with George's arm around her, rubbing her shoulder, and looking just as upset.

"Why did David Block kick you out of your home?"

"I came out as bisexual." Clay sat up proud. "I told him I was bisexual, and he kicked me out, telling me I'm not his son, and that all gay people should die."

"And where did you go after being kicked out?" Punz asked.

"Objection, relevance." The defence attorney stood up against.

"Sustained." The judge said, and Punz closed his mouth, with a small nod.

"Mr Block, do you believe the defendant is the type of person to commit these crimes?" Punz asked.

"Yes, I do. He does what he wants and doesn't care for others, even his own..." He closed his eyes briefly. "His own kids."

"You stated the defendant is your father. Despite this, do you want to see your father in prison?" He asked.

Clay swallowed, and finally looked over to the other side of the room, making eye contact with the man himself. David Block was sitting in his seat, hands gripping the edge of the table so tightly Clay thought it would splinter.

"Mr Block. Do you want to see your father in prison?" Punz asked.

"Yes. Yes, I never want to see him again, and I want him in prison." Clay said, staring at his father.

"Your honour, no further questions." Punz sat back down, and Clay breathed out in relief.

"Cross examination?" The judge said.

"Yes, your honour." The defence attorney stood up, and Clay's stomach dropped again. He forgot there was more, as the slimy lawyer walked in front of him. "Good afternoon Mr Block."

"Good afternoon." Clay said, slightly softly.

"Mr Block, do you have any physical evidence or eye witness to the charges pressed against my client." He started pacing as well. Clay took a moment to collect himself. This was fine, Punz prepared him for the possible questions.

"No, I don't have any evidence or eye witness to the charges."

"Have you lived with my client your entire life?"

"Yes, until recently."

"So while living in close quarters with my client, you never saw or heard anything related to these charges?"

"No, I didn't."

"When you got stitches in your forehead, what did you tell the hospital was the reason for them?" He asked, and Clay blinked, unprepared at the change in topic of conversation.

"I said I tripped and fell onto a dining table. But that-"

"You are quick to go against your father today and state his alleged behaviour towards you, but you have never said anything before now. How come?"

"I..." Clay's hands were sweaty. "I was still living with him when that happened. I was scared that if I told someone what happened, he would hurt me again." Clay said.

"You said you were kicked out of the house after allegedly being hurt by your father, when was this?"

"A few weeks ago. I forget exactly when."

"You haven't been living with him for weeks and you still refrained from saying anything until now. Why?"

"I had a lot of other things going on in my life, and Doomsday was coming so I didn't have time to even consider going to the police." Clay said, running a hand through his hair. He quickly dropped it, remembering Punz telling him that fidgeting made him look guilty. He wasn't lying, he was just nervous.

"Can you confirm that there is no physical documentation or eye witnesses of your father ever laying a physical hand on you."

"No, I can't confirm that. There *is* physical evidence on my body. And my sister has seen it happen, and my friends have seen him yell at me." Clay said, voice growing more shaky and quiet the more desperate he grew.

"But none of them or you have ever told someone?"

"No, but-"

"So it's only been brought up today in this hearing, unrelated to the charges against my client, in an attempt to discredit him, right?"

"Objection!" Punz stood up, at the same time the room began to mutter again.

"Order." The judge banged her gavel.

"Leading, lack of foundation, speculation." Punz said. Clay just blinked at the defence attorney, who was staring straight back, a small smile on his face.

"Sustained." The judge said.

"What jobs has David Block had over the past few years?"

"He is the Mayor currently. Before this he owned an insurance company. Before that he was unemployed."

"And you knew of his jobs, you lived with him, yet, you never noticed any signs of the charges, correct?"

"Well, I never saw him committing the crimes but it would explain a lot, like where we suddenly got a lot of money after having nothing for so long." Clay said.

"But you never saw it, not heard any of it, despite being so close to him for many years."

"No." Clay said softly.

"No further questions." The attorney smiled, before turning around and walking away.

"Prosecution, redirect?" The Judge spoke, and Punz stood up.

"No. your honour. May Clay Block be excused?" Punz asked.

"Yes, he may."

Clay couldn't stand up. He was staring at his father, who refused to even blink. His face was red and eyes piercing.

"Clay, you're excused." Punz said, after Clay didn't move.

He couldn't feel his hands, but he knew they were trembling. The entire room felt like it was shrinking. He failed. He messed up. It wasn't enough.

"Mr Block." The bailiff was beside him.

"I-I'm not finished." Clay stuttered. His mic was off now.

"You may not speak any further, your testimony has concluded. You may leave." The bailiff said.

Clay gripped the sides of his chair tightly, still under the eyes of his father.

He'll come for him. His father will kill him. And Drista. And George.

He could hear voices now, calling for him. Someone grabbed his arm, but he pulled away, panting. His heartbeat was in his ears, everything was so loud. He didn't even feel like he was in the room. He felt far away. Like he wasn't in his body. Like he wasn't even real.

"Clay." One clear voice, by his ear, and Clay turned to it, eyes watering.

George grabbed his forearms, eyes flicking between both his eyes with worry.

"He's going to find me. He-he's going to come for me." Clay gasped out. George pulled him into a hug.

"Come on, let's get out of here." He whispered, hand brushing through the back of his hair.

George pulled Clay off the stand, one arm around him, but George still had his crutches, so it was difficult for them both to walk, especially with Clay burying his head into George's neck

They walked straight through the courtroom, everyone's eyes on them. They met Drista, who was already standing up in the aisle, and the three of them left the courtroom without a second glance, Drista taking Clay a little off George so he could use his crutches properly.

"My hands. I-I can't feel them." Clay gasped out. They both pulled him to a bench outside the room and sat him down.

"It's ok, Clay. You did amazing." He said.

"N-no. He's going to g-get away with it. He'll come find us." Clay sobbed. George sat down next to him, and pulled his head against him, wrapping his arms around his shoulders.

"Can you hear my heartbeat?" George whispered, looking up at Drista who was still wiping her eyes. George just gently rocked Clay.

Clay nodded slightly, holding George's shirt with trembling hands.

"You did so good, Clay. He won't hurt you ever again." George said, swallowing the lump in his own throat.

"Drista!" A voice down the hall, and the girl turned, instantly relaxing, running over to Lorna who had come over.

Lorna hugged the crying girl, looking over and seeing George comforting Clay, eyes softening.

"I'm a coward. I always have been." Clay said, crying into George's shirt.

"You're not. You're the strongest person I know. You just sat in front an entire courtroom, and your father, and told them all what he did. You stood up for yourself. You're brave, Clay. So brave." George said back.

"I'm not brave."

"You are. You're the bravest person I know, Dream." He whispered into his ear.

"Oh, Clay." Lorna had joined them and sat down on Clay's other side. He let go of George to briefly hug her too, hands still shaky.

"You did so well, I'm sure." Lorna said.

"He did." Drista said.

"Let's go home. The verdict isn't for a few days. You can go home and rest, you don't have to attend court if you don't want to. Plus school is back Monday." Lorna said.

"Ok." Clay whispered, pulling away to grab George's hands again, both their pairs of hands shaky for different reasons. "Let's go home."

George reached up, wiping away one of Clay's tears, before pressing a kiss to where it was.

•

"I'm going." George gritted his teeth.

"No, you're not. George, I want you there, I really do, but you're still hurt." Clay said, gesturing to the crutches.

"It's the last week of class ever. I can't miss it." George said.

"You can go next week." Lorna entered the room, a hand on George's shoulder, but the boy just stared at Clay.

"Next week is exams. I want to be there with my friends in our last classes. Next week you only come in for the exams you have. I want to see my friends."

"You saw your friends last week." Lorna said.

"Only some of them." George said softly. They all met up at the park. Everyone but Tommy.

"I promise you can come next week." Clay said, grabbing George's hand and squeezing it.

"Please." George said, looking between his boyfriend and his mother.

"No, George. You're still shaky, and weak, and can't stay on your feet for long. Plus your foot is still healing." She said.

"We can call you at lunch, Georgie." Clay said.

George pulled away from his Mom and walked out of the room, limping with his crutches of course.

"I feel bad. It's our last week before exams." Clay said to her, and she grimaced and nodded.

"I know, but he really shouldn't be doing too much. In fact, I don't think he should even do the exams. None of you should, they opened up the schools way too early." She said.

"It's been a few weeks since Doomsday." Clay offered.

"A month makes no difference. The school is still half damaged, and kids are still hurt. They can't expect you to do exams while mourning people."

"The rest of the country is graduating now." Clay said with a shrug. "They can't hold it off forever."

"I know." Lorna gave him a hug and a kiss on the forehead. "You have a good day back, alright? Try not to think about the trial, ok? The jury verdict is in tomorrow, but if there's any news today, I'll give you a ring."

"Thanks Lorna. You and Mark always been so understanding and welcoming with me and Drista." Clay said softly, before pulling away. Lorna brushed through his hair once, sighing.

"It's what you deserve, Clay. I'm sorry about your father. But you're safe now, with us. We may not have superpowers, but we will protect you here." She said.

Clay wiped his eyes at that, giving her a smile.

"I'll protect you all as well." He said.

"I know you will, hon." She grabbed his hand, tapping against his ring. He followed the motion, and his eyes widened and he quickly looked back at her face.

"What?" He whispered, and she just smiled and winked.

"You have a good day at school."

"Lorna-"

"Have a good day at school, Clay." She repeated, ruffling his hair before walking out of the room. Clay stared after her.

Does she know he's Dream?

How?

Does she know George?

Clay shook his head. He didn't want to think about it. And frankly, he didn't want to know. He had school to attend.

•

"Clay!"

He was sick of being spoken to. The first bell hadn't even rung yet, and everyone was coming up to him, asking how he'd been, what's happening with the trial. He was sick of people.

But this was Tommy.

Clay was relieved the second he saw the boy was completely fine. Phil had said he was, but he hadn't seen the boy until now.

"Tommy, how are you man?" Clay said as the boy jogged over to him. Tommy greeted Clay with a slap on the back.

"I'm doing amazing. Don't remember what happened on Doomsday but Phil said I was controlled or something by the Blade and I was a villain!" He said.

"Really?" Clay asked, hoping he didn't sound fake.

"Yeah, Phil said the heroes took the jewel from me. I don't know what I did or who I was though." Tommy shrugged.

"Well, I'm glad to see you're doing ok."

"I'm awesome as usual. You?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. Not hurt at all. George is a little injured still, got crutches and is a little shaky." Clay explained, wishing the boy was here.

"Yeah. I know." Tommy said with a nod. Clay furrowed his eyebrows at that.

"How did you know?"

"Oh. I just saw him, chatting with Darryl." Tommy gestured his thumb behind him. "Had a chat with him too."



"Wait, George is *here*? At *school*?" Clay said, eyes wide.

"Uh... yeah?"

Clay walked around Tommy, speeding though the hallway. The sophomore had to jog to catch up.

"Can you slow down? Quit speed-running, I'm not fit enough for his." Tommy whined, grabbing Clay's bag like it would help pull him along.

Clay turned a corner and saw George at the end of the hallway, leaning against the lockers with his crutches, talking with Darryl and Skeppy.

Clay stopped, staring at the brunet, who looked over Darryl's shoulder, and froze when he saw Clay.

Clay huffed and walked over, and George stood up more straight.

"So yeah, we were both fine during Doomsday. I mean, we got separated halfway through, and I didn't find him until the next day, but neither of us got hurt and that's all that matters." Skeppy said, gripping Darryl's hand, who was nodding along.

"George." Clay arrived, and the brunet gave him a nervous smile.

"Clay."

"What are you doing?"

"I'm at school. Talking with my friends. You know, cause it's the last week of class." George said, nodding his head at Darryl and Skeppy.

"George-" Clay stated saying softly, but Tommy chimed in.

"Big C, you better not be telling Gogy what he can and cannot do." Tommy said, putting a hand on George's shoulder.

George glanced at Tommy, before frowning and looking at the floor. Clay saw what he was feeling. Guilt.

"He's injured. And shaky." Clay pointed. "You should be resting." He said to George.

"I can't rest." George said quietly, looking back up at Clay, who furrowed his eyebrows. "I can't sleep."

"Still?"

"Not without you." George whispered. But even then, very restless sleep, with sleep talking apparently.

The bell chimed, and students started heading to class.

"We have bio." George then said, clearing his throat and shrugging Tommy off.

"I will see you all at lunch." Darryl said, hooking his arm with Skeppy and leading him in a different direction.

"Yes! We can talk theories!" Tommy said with a grin. "I want to know who that Blade guy is. Been

terrorising us for so long, and fucking mind controlled me. I want to give him a piece of my mind." Tommy hit his fist against his other hand.

George and Clay stared at the boy.

"Maybe it's best if we never find out who it is." Clay offered, a nervous smile.

"Are you not dying to find out? I wish they made his face public. The guy kinda deserves it." Tommy scoffed.

George just turned around and started walking away on his crutches, not saying another word.

"See you at lunch, Tommy." Clay said, before quickly catching up with George, putting a hand gently on his back as he limped.

George didn't say a word as they walked to their bio class, and it made Clay nervous.

"You ok?"

"Mm-hm." George said.

"You know it's not our fault that Blade is-"

"I know, Clay." George mumbled, looking away. "I just don't want to see Tommy heartbroken."

"Yeah." Clay swallowed.

They reached the classroom, and Clay helped George to his seat, despite the brunette mumbling softly about being able to do it himself.

Nick joined them a few minutes later, smiling.

"What are you so happy about? We are back in school." George scoffed.

"Just saw Karl." Nick was still beaming.

"Simp." Clay coughed, and Nick rolled his eyes.

"Says you. George told me everything. *Be my boyfriend. Oh, Gogy please, I'm begging you, ugh you're so pretty.*" Nick mimicked Clay until he was punched in the arm.

"Alright. I know the circumstances suck, but you do have a final bio exam next week. Spend this time studying and if you have questions, come ask me." Mr Peterson said, who was sporting a cast on his wrist.

"How was the trial by the way?" Nick asked a little softer, and Clay swallowed.

"It, um... I don't know. They still have some evidence to go over today. The verdict is tomorrow hopefully."

"Are you going to be there for it?" Nick asked.

"Yeah, I think so." Clay said quietly, and George put a gentle hand on his forearm, as he opened up his laptop. "I need to know."

"Fair enough. Do you want me to come with as well? I've always wanted to go to a trial." Nick

asked, and Clay rolled his eyes, thankful for the slight intensity change.

"The courtroom is already so full. Lorna wasn't even allowed in. Drista was, obviously, because she's related. Me, because I was called as a witness. And I listed George as my support person." Clay said, putting his own hand over George's, brushing his fingers against his knuckles absentmindedly.

"Support person?"

"Someone a witness can bring. Often witnesses have been through trauma or have a bad relationship with the prosecutor. The support person can sometimes even sit in the witness box with them. But we didn't do that because Sam's lawyer said the focus needed to be on Clay and his injuries, not mine." George said, tapping the crutches he had rested on the table.

"I see. Well. At least I'll get to attend a trial for someone else." Nick said with a grimace, pulling out his phone.

"You know it probably won't be a trial right." George whispered.

"Why?" Nick responded, blinking.

"It'll be in and out, sentenced to life for Blade." He whispered.

"Isn't the justice system all about innocent until proven guilty?" Clay responded.

"The entire city literally saw the man commit multiple massacres, he has tormented the entire city, personally manipulated hundreds of people and committed terrorism." George responded dryly.

"Still. He deserves a trial." Nick added.

"Well, that can't happen without an interrogation." George mumbled.

"Which we need to do soon." Clay nodded.

"They said they are ready for it whenever." Nick said.

"Not until I can transform." George said, looking back at his laptop screen.

"George, we don't know when that is, and we can't hold off for that much longer. The city deserves answers. We deserve answers." Nick said. George pulled his hand out of Clay's, to start typing notes on his laptop.

"G, come on." Clay said softly. "You know we need to soon."

"I'm not G, Clay." George clenched his teeth, and the blonde furrowed his eyebrows.

"We talked about this, you will always be-"

"Well, I'm not. Am I? And I have to be for the interrogation, but it's not possible. Because GNotFound no longer exists." George turned to look at him, whispering harshly.

"Why doesn't George just come as himself? Blade already knows who he is." Nick whispered, trying to defuse the tension.

"But no one else knows." George said, turning to look back at his work. "And I don't want people to know."

"Well, Blade is probably going to tell people anyways. It will get out, he knows who we all are." Clay said, watching George and wanting to reach out again.

George glanced to his right, at Nick, who was staring at him.

"What?" Clay said, noticing their look.

"Well." Nick started.

"Nick." George seethed.

"I'm snitching, I don't care. George said he'll do a trade with Techno. He doesn't reveal our names, and he either gets time off his sentence, or we don't interrogate him with the jewel. Basically. Techno offered without the manipulation. George offered the reduced sentence."

"George." Clay turned to him, a stern look. The brunet just gritted his teeth and looked back at his work.

"Snitch." He muttered.

"That man deserves every year in prison for what he did." Nick said with a shrug.

"Don't you remember last time you tried to make a deal with him?" Clay said.

George shuddered, seeing the trident plunge into Dream's stomach.

"But these are our identities." He whispered, hand reaching up and touching the Sapphire under his shirt.

"So? We don't even have to hide them anymore, he was the one after them and he's locked up. Who cares if the city knows?" Nick said.

"Me." George turned to look at them both. "I care. GNotFound and George were two different worlds. At one point, I hated them both. Now, I miss it. I can't have them blur. I don't think I could handle it." He said, lips trembling slightly, eyes stinging.

Clay reached out and took his hands.

"And you, Clay. You said this was your escape. Dream was your escape. I won't let him take that away from you." George's voice was beginning to waver. "I promise I won't let him."

"You're my escape. I don't care what happens." Clay said, brushing a piece of hair behind George's ear.

"But *I* care." George responded.

•

"George, just go home." Clay said, stopping the boy in the hallway. George was panting slightly, leaning heavily on his crutches.

"I'm fine." He tried to take a step forward, but Clay stopped him.

"At least, look..." Clay sighed, and pulled George's crutches away from him. "Get on my back." He turned around.

"What." George said, staring at the back of the boy's head.

"I'm not having you drop dead in the hallway. I'll give you a piggy back to history." Clay bent down slightly.

"People will look at us."

"So?"

"Clay, you aren't out." George gently put his hands on Clay's shoulders, tracing the bone lightly, it sent shivers down Clay's spine.

"I came out to my father, a jury and an entire court room and judge. I think I can handle high school teenagers assuming whatever they want." He said.

"Are you sure?" George asked, and Clay nodded, so the brunet threaded his arms around Clay's neck, and the dirty blonde reached behind to pick him up, getting George to hold onto the crutches.

George was laughing as they walked through the halls, and it made Clay smile as well. He felt small tugs in his hair, and constant adjusting of his grip on his shoulders. He liked George being close to him, touching him. Clay was a physically affectionate person, but George usually wasn't.

"Clay!" A shrill voice came from their left, and George's soft laughs stopped, as Clay did too, turning to see who it was.

Violet came walking over, eyes on the two boys, and a fake smile on her face.

"I'm so glad you're ok!" She said, reaching out and touching Clay's arm.

The dirty blonde pulled away, ignored her, and kept walking.

"Clay!" She caught up, stepping in front of him, making him stop.

"What." He asked, voice monotone.

"I was just saying hi, you didn't need to be rude." She looked at George, who had his arms tight around Clay, staring at her with a tense jaw. "Hello George."

"Sorry, I've forgotten who you are." He responded indifferently.

"Can you move out of the way?" Clay asked, and Violet crossed her arms over her chest.

"Are you not going to ask if I am ok after Doomsday?"

"No, I don't really care."

"Why are you being so mean." She said with a frown.

"You outed George. Now fuck off Violet, I don't want to see you again." Clay said, taking a step around the girl, but she reached out and grabbed George's dangling foot and tugged, making Clay turn around to glare at her.

"Don't fucking touch him." He seethed.

"Clay, stop." Violet's lip trembled. "I didn't mean to out him. It was only because he was trying to manipulate you and make you gay as well." She said.

"Well news-flash, Violet. I'm bisexual. And dating him. So maybe gay is actually contagious. In which case, you better run." Clay stepped closer to her, and she stepped back, eyes wide.

"You're dating?!" She exclaimed, and a few people turned around to look at them. George nervously swallowed, tightening his grip on Clay's shirt, suddenly disliking the height now that everyone could see him.

"Yes. And?" Clay said, staring at the girl.

Violet said nothing.

"Clay, can we go." George leaned down to whisper, and the blonde nodded, turning around and walking away from Violet without another glance.

They had a few stares as they left, and it made George feel uneasy.

"You can put me down now." He said softly, but Clay tightened his arms around George's legs.

"We aren't at history yet."

Even when they arrived, Clay took George all the way to their seats at the back, finally letting him down.

"Thanks." George said softly, as Clay sat down beside him. The taller boy grinned.

"My pleasure."

"Are you ok?" George asked.

"Of course. Why wouldn't I be?" Clay asked, eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"Well, you just came out. To Violet. And like, a bunch of random people. And told them you were dating me." George said. Clay took George's hand, searching his eye.

"I'm sorry, we didn't speak about being public." Clay said, eyebrows furrowed.

"No, it's fine. For me. I was just worried about you. I assumed you wanted to keep it on the down-low since you aren't out." George said, glancing between both Clay's eyes as if searching for a disguised emotion.

"I want to be as public as possible." Clay leaned forward and kissed George's cheek. "I get to show off my amazing and gorgeous boyfriend, why would I want to hide that? I don't care what anyone thinks of me." Clay said.

"Really?" George said, with a slight blush. Clay stared into his eyes, smiling with soft dimples.

"Yes, really." Clay said.

George smiled back, and Clay pulled George closer by his chair, throwing an arm around his shoulders and looking down at the brunet, grabbing one of his hands and threading their fingers together.

"You said you haven't been sleeping?"

"Oh." George's small smile fell. "Yeah." Their hands fell into his lap.

"How come?"

"I don't know. Since I've gotten home, nothings gotten better. I get... I still get nightmares." George said quietly.

"Me too." Clay said, and George looked up at him.

"You do?"

"Of course. Every night."

"But I haven't noticed you wake up." George said.

"I just pull you closer and stay in bed with my eyes closed, picturing all our good memories instead. Pretending those are my dreams, and not you dying in the city centre, or lifeless on a machine, or being killed by the Blade, or absorbed by your own shield." Clay said softly.

"I do the same." George swallowed. "There was so much blood, it stains my hands."

"My blood?" Clay asked.

"Yes. And the city's blood." George whispered.

"Would you consider taking your pills? To sleep tonight?" Clay asked.

George didn't answer for a minute, just tracing Clay's knuckles absentmindedly in the back of history class, the teacher at the front not doing anything as usual, all the students having their own private conversations about their own complicated lives.

"Can you make sure I wake up?" George said softly.

Clay's eyes softened, and he pulled George's hand to his face, pressing a gentle kiss to the back of it.

"I'll be right beside you when you do." He whispered against his hand.

•

"I promise I'll survive the one hour class without you, Clay." George said, pulling his hand away from the boy, but regretting it when he saw the look on his face. He looked like a puppy that had been shot.

"I can join you?" Clay basically begged.

"Last time you asked this I was getting targeted by a villain. I'm fine, just have crutches." George shook his head with a roll of his eyes.

"Then text me the entire time." Clay said.

"Fine. Go away." George waved him off. Clay pursed his lips, staring at George for a few moments.

He quickly stepped forward and pressed a fleeting kiss against his cheek before turning and dashing away. George immediately blushed, covering his cheek and turning to watch the boy leave.

"He's obsessed with you." A voice came from behind, and George turned to see a smiling Xavier.

"Your arm!" George said, looking at the sling. Xavier shrugged.

"Not as bad as most people. And you, what happened?" He asked, looking at the crutches.

"Oh, nothing bad either. Just hurt my foot a little." George chuckled. "I haven't seen you in ages, how are you going?"

"I'm ok. Darcy and Felicity are great too, they aren't hurt at all." Xavier said, as they both walked into the classroom.

"Oh, that's good. And Seb? What about him?"

"Oh, we aren't really friends anymore." Xavier said, as they both sat down.

"What happened?"

"He just... he sort of liked me. But then he started saying some really awful things about you. And Clay. So I cut him off, I don't want to be involved with people like that." Xavier said with a grimace.

"Oh." George blinked. "What... what sort of things?"

"Just how you were leading me on or something. And Clay at the same time, even though you didn't lead either of us on. And he thought I still like you, so I think he was just jealous." Xavier explained.

"Do you? Still like me, I mean." George asked awkwardly. Xavier smiled and shook his head.

"No, I've moved on now, it's been a few months. I hope that doesn't offend you or anything." He chuckled, and George breathed out in relief.

"No, that's good. Im glad."

"Besides, I sort of have eyes for someone new." Xavier said, glancing at his phone that lit up at that exact moment, and he tried to hide his smile.

"Well I hope things work out for you." George said, and Xavier looked back at him.

"For you as well, George. And I'm glad you and Clay sorted everything out. You really are perfect for each other." He said.

"Thank you." George blushed a little. "I'm so lucky."

"I think he's lucky too, you know." Xavier said, poking George's arm. "You're a great person George. And I'm glad he makes you happy. And you clearly make him happy as well."

"Yeah." George grinned. "I'm really, really happy."

•

"You know..." Karl said while was doodling on the corner of Nick's book. "I kind of don't want my house to get fixed."

"Why." Nick smiled, pulling out a red pen and added a few little hearts around the tiny blobs his



boyfriend was drawing.

"Cause then I won't be able to stay over at yours." Karl frowned, leaning his head against his shoulder.

"You can stay over any time you like. Even if your house gets rebuilt again." Nick said, lifting the pen and drawing a tiny heart on Karl's thumb.

"You'd want me over?"

"Obviously." Nick snorted. "You're already at my house now, why wouldn't I want you to stay over?"

"Well, you still haven't told me the truth about-

"You still haven't let that go, huh." Nick tapped the pen on Karl's cheek, who crinkled his nose.

"Your excuse for being missing the entirety of Doomsday was, *I obviously had to go raid the store to stock up on Reese's cups*. I know you're lying." Karl said.

"I'm not lying. I was the only person in the city with a brain."

"Then where are all the Reese's cups that you claimed you got?" Karl narrowed his eyes.

"They didn't have that many. I ate them all."

"If you were manipulated, you can tell me." Karl lifted his head and looked into Nick's eyes with furrowed eyebrows. "It's not embarrassing. Lots of people were."

"I wasn't manipulated." Nick rushed to say. *Technically, I was.*

"Then where were you? I called you so often and you didn't respond. I..." Karl swallowed the lump in his throat. "I thought you-" he didn't finish his sentence, and Nick pulled him into a hug.

"I was ok." Nick whispered, combing through the boy's hair. "Do you really want me to tell you?"

"Yes. Please." Karl whispered back, squeezing him tighter.

Nick pulled away, and rolled up his sleeve, holding out his hand.

Karl looked at it for a few moments, before hesitantly putting his own hand in it. Nick snorted, and shook his head, pulling his hand out, and pointing at the bracelet on his wrist.

"Have you seen this before?"

"Yeah... you wear it a bunch. It's a plain band." Karl said.

Nick looked around the class, everyone was busy chatting and minding their own business. It was psychology class, and no one was bothering to study today.

Nick leaned in to Karl's ear, lips brushing against it with a smile.

"I'm Sapnap." He whispered, his breath sending chills down Karl's spine.

When Nick pulled back, he nervously looked at Karl's face. The boy's jaw had dropped, eyes darting around his face, then looking at the bracelet.

"No you're not." Karl laughed.

"Fine." Nick shrugged, picking up his pen and looking back down at his work.

"No. You're not." Karl said again, without the laughter. Nick just hummed, as if he was indifferent to Karl's reaction.

Karl grabbed his arm, and tugged slightly, so Nick would look at him.

"Are you actually?" Karl asked.

Nick smiled, and unclasped the bracelet. The second he did, the shimmering Diamond appeared, and Karl's eyes widened.

He looked back up at Nick's face, and broke out into a smile, jumping forward and wrapping his arms around his neck again.

"I have the coolest boyfriend in the world." Karl said.

Nick reclasped the bracelet, and hugged the boy back tightly, turning his face towards his cheek.

"Actually, I do." He whispered, and pressed a kiss into the blushing skin.

•

George stared at the pill bottle in Clay's hand, as he shut the door behind him.

"It's nearly empty." George commented, and Clay laughed, grabbing a water bottle too and sitting back down beside George on the bed.

"And you've only taken them like three times." Clay said, shaking his head and passing the water bottle to George, before tipping out two pills into his own hand.

George stared at them in Clay's hand, uninjured foot tapping on the ground, and shaky hands trying to hold the water bottle steady.

"You feeling ok?" Clay asked.

"No. I'm terrified." George swallowed.

Clay gently grabbed George's hand and opened up his fingers, placing the two pills into his palm.

"You've done this before."

"Not with a concussion. What if I don't wake up." George said. Clay was still holding his hand, keeping it steady.

"If I remember correctly, I think you did take them once when you definitely had some sort of head injury. I think you accidentally took them." Clay laughed.

"You won't leave me right." George said. Clay leaned forward, pressing a kiss against George's forehead.

"You know I would never."

George nodded, and then shakily raised the pills to his mouth, putting them and swallowing them

with water.

"And you swallowed them?" Clay asked. George rolled his eyes and open his mouth, sticking out his tongue.

"What? You gonna check my stomach too to see if they are actually dissolving?" George said, with a bit of attitude.

"Hm. Maybe I should." Clay poked George in the stomach, and the brunet doubled over with a shout. Clay just laughed and then poked him in the sides.

"No!" George shouted, but couldn't help his manic laughter when Clay continued to tickle him. "Please, no! Stop tickling- Clay!" He kicked him in the stomach, and the dirty blonde gasped in mock offence.

"Did you just kick me?" Clay said. George shook his head, eyes wide with fear. "I think you did." Clay said, narrowing his eyes, a hint of a smirk.

"No. I didn't." George backed up on the bed, but Clay attacked, grabbing his arms and pinning them to the bed with one hand, his other one tickling George under his armpits, making him squeal and try to kick Clay again. "Stop!"

"Say you love me and I'll stop." Clay grinned, tickling his sides again.

"Fuck you!" George shouted, but then yelled again when Clay didn't stop tickling. "St-stop. Clay. Please!"

"Say it!" Clay laughed.

"Ok! Ok! I love you, I love you, Clay, stop!" George said, and the dirty blonde stopped, bringing his beaming face close to George's, who was panting in relief.

"Say it again." Clay said.

"Love you." George mumbled.

Clay pressed a kiss against his lips.

"I love you too, Georgie. Now." He got off George, rolling onto his side, and pulling the brunet against his chest. "Let's get some sleep."

"Well, *I'll* get sleep. I don't know about you." George said, hugging Clay around his waist, head resting on his chest.

"I'll be fine."

"No you won't. The verdict is tomorrow." George whispered, and Clay's grip on George's shoulder tightened.

"Yeah." He croaked out. George reached for his free hand and intertwined their fingers, resting them on Clay's stomach.

"Whatever happens, that man won't ever get close to you again. I won't let him."

"What are you going to do against him?" Clay chuckled. "He's a bit bigger than you."

"Punch him. In the face. Or kick him in the balls." George shrugged.

"Or you could shoot him with your bow. Knock him out with your shield again. At least punch him with your super strength." Clay said.

"Hm." George just hummed, pressing closer to Clay. "I'm fine with just a regular punch."

"But a super punch would be way stronger." Clay said.

George shut his eyes.

"I don't think I'll have super strength ever again. Or my shield. Or my bow." George said softly.

"You will." Clay rubbed his shoulder. "I know you will."

"You don't know that." George mumbled. "But it's ok. I don't mind."

"You don't?" Clay whispered, surprised.

"I like being George." He squeezed Clay once around the middle. "I have everything and everyone I need as George."

"What about GNotFound?"

"I am GNotFound."

He slept through the night.

•

George woke up shivering cold. Clay had stolen the blanket in the night, and had apparently rolled over.

George just leaned in closer to Clay, and reached for the blanket to pull over himself, but he froze as he reached for the blanket, staring at his hand, noticing two things about it.

One, it wasn't shaking.

Two, it was covered in a thin, blue material.

George immediately sat up, holding out both his arms, and staring at them. Blue, from shoulder to fingertips.

He jumped out of bed, and dashed to the mirror, staring at the reflection.

Blue from head to toe, thin material with the familiar red and white box on his chest. His crazy hair was a few shades darker, and his wide goggles sat on the top half of his face. On his wrist, a rubber band, and on his chest, the Sapphire.

"Mask off." He said.

He detransformed, his clothing back to his plain shirt and sweats, his brown hair was messy from sleep, and eye bags under his eyes. His foot was aching, and his hands were back to shaky.

But his pendent was blank.

"Mask on." He whispered, and relished in the familiar tingling that swept through his body, the

power that surged through his veins and the relief in his heart.

George began to cry, and Clay immediately stirred in his sleep.

"George?" Clay mumbled, reaching for a boy that was no longer beside him.

The disoriented blonde sat up, and looked over, blinking a few times at the crying George.

"Georgie, what's wrong? Come here." He said, voice croaky and eyes droopy.

George shook his head, staring at his reflection still.

"Wait."

Clay had properly woken up now, and he immediately got out of bed, running at George, and embracing him tightly.

"You transformed! You're better! You can heal again." Clay kissed him on the cheek, under the goggles, grinning against his face.

George hugged him back just as tight, trying to stop crying. Clay rubbed his back, still grinning.

"I told you." He whispered.

"I guess I needed some sleep." George said softly, a small smile while he reached up to wipe his eyes. Clay squeezed him tighter.

"I think you actually just needed to relax." Clay responded, bringing a hand up to run through George's hair. "I think the second you stopped trying so hard to transform, your body relaxed."

"I missed GNotFound." George whispered, feeling the confidence and healing lightly up his body.

"You didn't go anywhere." Clay laughed.

"Yeah. But..." George pulled away and touched his Sapphire. "I missed running on rooftops with my partner."

"Oh. Your *partner*." Clay raised his eyebrows, hands finding George's waist. "Who is this mysterious person?"

"You wouldn't know him." George put his hands behind Clay's neck. "He's kind of an idiot, always trying to flirt with me, and he's a little too yellow for my liking."

"That all?" Clay asked, pulling George closer, searching his goggles.

"He's kinda tall. He has green eyes too, I assume. A pretty smile, a couple of freckles not hidden by his stupid mask."

"Pretty smile?" Clay grinned.

"Very pretty. I'd take a guess and say he's probably attractive without the mask. But I wouldn't know." George shrugged. "Doesn't matter. He has one major fault."

"Oh? What's that?" Clay asked.

"He's rather..." George grinned. "Impulsive."

"You little shit." Clay said, shoving George away, who started cackling with laughter. "Shh. It's 6am, you're family is probably just waking up."

"I don't care. I slept though the night, woke up transformed, I can feel my body healing and I have the most amazing and gorgeous person in the world standing right in front of me." George said

Clay smiled, and pulled George closer by grabbing his pendent.

"I believe that honour actually belongs to me." He dipped his head and kissed George once again. "And your eyes... they're so beautiful." Clay added with a whisper.

"My eyes? You can't see them right now." George said.

Clay shrugged, inching closer and staring into the goggles, looking through the lens, and finally seeing the eyes he's been searching for. Finally seeing the boy he's loved for a year. Finally seeing the eyes he's dreamed about.

"Yes I can." Clay grinned.

•

There was constant murmuring in the courtroom. The word was that the jury had come to a decision, and the verdict would be announced today.

So the Block children and George sat in the gallery of the courtroom, anxiously waiting for the result. Clay was holding onto George's crutches tightly.

George had stayed transformed for a while that morning, and he had healed almost completely. His foot was completely fine now, same with the slice on his arm. He was still a little shaky and exhausted, but he hopes that it's just a side effect from actually taking his pills last night.

But no one could know he magically got better over night. So he changed over his bandages, and continued to use his crutches.

George reached out and grabbed one of Clay's hands, giving it a quick squeeze.

The jury entered the room, and everyone immediately went silent as they took their seats. George thought his hand was going to break from how tight Clay was holding it.

"Can the jury spokesperson please stand." The Judge said, and a man stood up. "Did the jury come to a unanimous verdict?" The judge asked them.

"Yes, your honour."

"And what is the verdict?" The judge asked.

Clay may have just been hyper aware of everything in the room, but he heard the slight squeak of a chair, and he immediately turned to look at it.

David Block had turned to look at him, and was staring him in the eyes, cold, hardened and immobilising.

Clay stared back, feeling bile rising in his throat.

"We the jury, find the defendant, *guilty* on all charges." The jury spokesperson said.

Drista let out a laugh, standing up, at the same time the entire room began to speak. George started squeezing Clay's hand, and talking in his ear. The judge called for order and was speaking to the room.

But Clay heard none of it. His father was still staring at him. Clay didn't move. And neither did David Block.

"Clay! We won!" George said. "You did it, it's over."

David Block stood up, with security on either side of him now, still staring at Clay.

"When I get out, I'm coming for you both. And your stupid fucking boyfriend, Clay." David Block spat, and was immediately handcuffed and pulled back.

Clay stood up, jaw set and eyes stern.

"Fuck you. I'll never see you again, and you won't come anywhere near Drista and George. Rot in fucking hell, father!" Clay shouted across the room.

George and Drista each grabbed one of Clay's hands and pulled him quickly out of the court before anyone could kick him out.

Drista was crying, and Clay was also tearing up.

They second they were out of the room, Drista ran straight to Lorna for a hug, and Clay jumped onto George, burying his face into his neck.

"You did it. You won. He's gone. He won't hurt you ever again." George was crying now too, along with Clay.

"He's gone. I won." Clay repeated.

Clay kissed George on the cheek, before turning around.

"Drista." He said, and his sister ran to him, colliding in an embrace and breaking down immediately. "He's gone." Clay said, face in her hair.

"I don't think I've ever thanked you, Clay." Drista whispered to him, and Clay just held her tighter.

"You don't need to thank me. I only did what a brother should." He said back.

•

"Phil should be here soon." George said, hanging up the phone. "He's bringing Bad."

"Great." Clay muttered.

"Well, we need him obviously. Someone has to wear the Ruby for the interrogation." Sapnap said, flicking his coin into the axe, and then back again.

"It's going to be recorded, and Techno's going to expose our identities. Unless we-"

"We aren't giving him less time. He should be locked up forever, not just let out early because we want to keep our secrets." Clay said.

"I think we earned our secrets. We defeated him, protected the city. The one thing we ask for in

return from the city is to not know who we are." George said.

"I have an idea but none of you are going to like it." BadBoyHalo entered the room, a little nervously. George turned to him, arms crossed against his chest. "Hi GNotFound! It's lovely to meet you. Thanks for everything you've done for the city." Bad said enthusiastically.

"And you're BadBoyHalo." George said slowly.

"Yep."

"What was your idea, Bad?" Clay asked.

"Well, while I manipulate Techno to tell the truth, I also manipulate him not to say any of your names." Bad said.

"That won't work, because the second you take off the Ruby, the manipulation will be gone." Sarnap said.

Bad just slowly nodded, while the heroes all stared at him. And then it clicked for George.

"You're suggesting that you don't take off the Ruby ever." George said slowly, and Bad swallowed nervously, nodding again.

"I know you guys have your reservations about me. But my one job would only be to help in the police. I would only ever transform to help interrogate murderers or other bad people. I would never take it off."

"You have one of the most powerful jewels on you, we don't even know who you are, and you expect us to just trust you with the Ruby, the jewel of manipulation?" Clay said.

"I would never use it for bad." Bad said, eyes wide. "I would never hurt someone."

"You're a fucking idiot if you think we'd just trust you with something like that." Sarnap scoffed.

"Language!" Bad scolded him.

George blinked, staring at Bad for a few moments.

"No." George said, putting a hand on his forehead. "No. There's no way."

"What?" Clay asked.

"Where's Phil?" George asked, his voice was sweet but forced through his teeth like poison on his tongue.

"I'm here." Phil walked in with a wave. "Alright. The room's all set up for the it interrogation."

"Phil." George said sweetly. "Please don't tell me that you gave another precious jewel to BadBoyHalo, a high school student at Pandora High." He said.

Phil pursed his lips, looking at Bad.

"What did you say to them?" He asked.

"Nothing? Just the idea of me keeping the Ruby." Bad said.



"He also language Sapnap." George seethed.

"Shit." Phil muttered.

"Language." Darryl said.

"Darryl!?" Sapnap stood up, and Bad's eyes widened.

"What?" He laughed nervously. "Who?"

"No way." Clay stared at the hero.

"I'm not.... no! You guys are such muffins." Bad said.

"Detransform, Darryl." Phil sighed.

"Mask off." Bad mumbled, and BadBoyHalo was revealed with a teenage boy.

"I have to admit, I wasn't expecting that. But now I know BadBoyHalo is Darryl, I think he's the only person I would ever trust with the Ruby." Clay said.

"Do you guys know me or something?" Darryl asked, confused.

"Phil what the flying fuck is wrong with you? Like actually, I thought you would have learned from us by now not to recruit teenagers." George said, pointing at the man.

"Language." Darryl said quietly.

"It was just convenience, ok?" Phil sighed.

"No, it's ridiculous. But we have more pressing issues than your stupid morals." George said, and began walking to the door.

"GNotFound, I'm sorry-"

"No, fuck you, Phil. And do not language me Darryl. *Fuck you.*" George said.

"I know I've done some things, I'm not proud of them." Phil grimaced.

"You've said that to me so many times. And yet, you never seem to learn." George said.

"Alright, let's go." Clay clapped once.

"I don't think I will come. For one, I'm not a hero, and two... I just... I don't think I can see him." Phil said.

George stared at the man.

"Sounds about right. Bye Phil." He walked out of the door.

"We'll update you after." Sapnap said to Phil. "Transform, *BadBoyHalo.*"

It was almost upsetting how easy it is for the heroes to just freely walk through the station. No one checked their identity, or any weapons, or were even watching them. George couldn't decide if it was a good or bad thing.

The interrogation room was in a much bigger setting than the room George had visited Techno in

before. And this one has a lot more people in it.

"Bad, do it immediately." George said, and Bad nodded. "We only have ten minutes before Bad detransforms. But once you give him the task of tell the truth, you can still control him while a civilian." He then opened the door

Techno was still handcuffed of course, but the table was longer, and there were police standing in every corner of the room. The second the heroes entered, everyone went quiet.

"Manipulate." Bad said, going straight for Techno, who's smile fell and he tried to avoid the touch, but Bad got him.

"Do not ever say or hint at who they are, or the names of, GNotFound, Dream, Sapnap and Liberator." Bad said.

Techno's eyes widened, and he turned to look at George.

"You fucking bastard."

"Language." Bad said, and Techno promptly hit himself in the face with his handcuffed hands.

"What the hell."

He hit himself again.

"Wait, why isn't he in a state like the villains were? He seems conscious." George said, recalling the way everyone's eyes were glazed over.

"Oh. I just... didn't do that." Bad said.

"What?" Clay asked.

"I can choose whether I put them in the state where they forget after, or just like... do the things I tell them." Bad said.

"Seriously? So Techno will remember every secret he spills?" Sapnap said, eyes glistening with glee.

"Yep." Bad nodded, looking bad at the man. "You will tell the truth to every question you are asked today." Bad then said, and Techno gritted his teeth.

"Were you the Blade?" George asked, and Techno snorted.

"Yes. Also wow. I'm surprised you actually transformed. Very quick. How did you do it, G- G-" Techno cleared his throat, like that would help him get George's name out. "G. Not. Found." He seethed.

"Next question." Dream stepped forward. "Where did you get the Ruby?"

Techno was clearly uncomfortable, trying to hold back the words. George almost felt bad, he knows what that feels like.

"It was given to me in a will." Techno said.

"Who's will?" Dream asked.

"Please." Techno stared at George. "Don't make me say."

"You don't get let off easy, you killed hundreds of people, Techno." George said.

"Say the answer when you are asked." Bad said, and Techno gritted his teeth.

"Kristin."

"Who?" Sapnap asked.

"Phil's wife. My adoptive mother."

George's eyes widened. He remembered Tommy saying something about her. "*She was Phil's wife.*" Was. She was his wife.

"When did she die?" George asked.

"About seven years ago." Techno said, hands clenched on the table.

"Why did Kristin have the Ruby? Did she have the others?"

"I don't know." Techno answered.

George was putting the pieces together in his head. There's no way it was a coincidence that Phil and Kristin both happened to collect the magical jewels. Unless Kristin gave Phil the others in her will or Phil didn't know she kept that one. Or Phil lied.

"What does having all four of the precious jewels do?" George asked.

Techno grunted, trying to hold back. "They..." He took a breath. "One of the things you can do is bring someone back from the dead."

Everyone in the room's jaws dropped.

"That's not possible." Clay said, hand touching his ring.

"You wear all four, and the Carnelian, and they come back to life."

"What's the catch? There's a catch." George narrowed his eyes.

"Four people die." Techno smirk.

"Four? Why four?" Sapnap asked.

"One for each precious jewel. Four random people in the nearest vicinity die."

"Why did you think it was worth it? Killing hundreds of people, two Doomsdays, multiple years, just to bring, I'm assuming Kristin, back to life." George said.

"Have you ever met Mumza?" Techno asked back, but then coughed, not having answered the question. "It's not just being able to bring someone back to life. There's more. Normally if you wear multiple jewels at once, they overpower you. There's one exception, which is if you wear all four precious jewels *and* the Carnelian." Techno said.

"So if you activate all four, you can use them all and not die." Clay said.

"Yes."

"But what is the point? Why did you want all the jewels?" George asked.

"Power, mostly. For starters, bring Kristin back."

"Why? Why kill for her?" Sapnap asked.

"She had all the research on the jewels. She knew the extent of all the powers. She knew everything about them, it's part of why Phil made a jewellery shop, in her honour. Well..." Techno scoffed, but didn't elaborate. He couldn't. He couldn't expose Phil was Liberator. "But she was also my family."

"Oh, and family means a lot to you, huh." Dream scoffed. "You manipulated both your brothers."

"I never got to explain to them why. If I told them what it was for, they would have understood." Techno said.

"So you wanted Kristin back, because she was family but also because she knew the jewels? What did she know that you wanted?"

"What else you can do with all four. How you can fuse other jewels further into one, and use multiple powers at once. I could use the flying jewel, or the fire one. There were so many possibilities but I didn't know how." Techno said.

"But why would you want that? What's the purpose?"

"Did you ever just consider that maybe there is no purpose or reasoning to my decisions. And maybe I just wanted to see the world burn. Maybe I wanted to burn this shithole of a city to the ground and see destruction wherever I go." Techno said.

"Language."

"But why?"

"Why not?" Techno's eyes seemed to sparkle. "Life's a bit boring without chaos, isn't it? Didn't I make your life more interesting just by causing my havoc?"

George couldn't deny that.

"Why is the Ruby so much more overpowered than the other precious jewels? A shield for less than a minute, and the Ruby can manipulate someone basically forever?" Sapnap asked.

"It has other weaknesses. My hand." Techno shifted so the arm that was strapped to his chest without the hand was noticeable. "Healing with the Ruby is very slow. Nearly nonexistent. My hand didn't heal back. It probably would have for you in like, half an hour."

"Faster healing." George commented.

"And it's not noticeable, but since the Ruby is more about mind games, it's not as built for speed or strength or agility. You guys are better fighters. I was good with it because I had practice. This..." He glanced at Bad. "Imposter. Would be awful at fighting."

"Good thing I don't need to fight." Bad said.

"And after the first Doomsday? What happened?" Dream asked.

"I've said this already. I used the Ruby and Carnelian combined, it nearly broke me. I couldn't

transform for two years. But I had some jewels and convinced people to fight in the city. I was testing if the Liberator was still alive. And then out of nowhere, two young obnoxious kids came and defeated my villains." Techno scoffed, eyeing George and Dream.

"Do you know the origin of the gems? Why are there special ones?" George asked.

"The legend is that each jewel was the first jewel of its kind. Your Sapphire was the first Sapphire ever created. Emerald the first Emerald. It's like that for every jewel. But that's just legend." Techno shrugged.

"You know you're going to prison for life." Dream then said, and Techno pursed his lips.

"I assumed nothing less. I failed, and these are the consequences. Will I be able to speak with my family?" He asked.

"If they want to."

"Do you think Tommy would see me?" Techno asked.

"He doesn't even know yet, so I wouldn't know." George said softly.

"I see."

The room was silent for a moment.  
And Bad's earring buzzed twice.

"I can't think of any more questions right now." George said, looking at Dream and Sapnap first before looking at the police officers.

"Is this it?" Techno asked.

"There may be a trial, but you'll be in for life." George said to him.

Techno just nodded.

"Well. I'd shake your hand and say it was a good fight but-" He looked down at the table. "I'm missing a hand and the other one is preoccupied."

"You're an awful person, Blade." George said simply, and Techno chuckled a low, monotone laugh.

"I think I'm exactly like every person on this planet. Just more outwardly destructive. There aren't many good humans left in the world. Maybe I'm one of the few that actually admit I'm not a decent person." Techno said.

"Just because there's a lot of bad people doing awful things, doesn't mean there isn't some good." George said, looking at Dream, and Sapnap, and Bad.

"Maybe there is no good without the bad, huh GNotFound." Techno leaned back in his seat.

"Maybe you're right about that, Blade." George said, crossing his arms and looking at the man before him. The one that was the catalyst for his awful year and a half.

But maybe there was some truth to that.  
Maybe there aren't superheroes without supervillains.  
And maybe nothing feels good when you've never known evil.

•

George was running late.  
And he was literally running.

Along rooftops, jumping from chimney to chimney. There were birds this high, and clouds just a little further up.

He felt his phone buzz in his pocket, and he ignored it to keep running. He knows exactly what it was. He was on his way, just got caught up in talking with the new Mayor.

Sam had ideas. Bright ones, hopeful ones. Ones to repair a broken city and stitch up the holes that were left. One of which were statues of the heroes. George had to decline that.

But regardless, he made George late.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm coming." He muttered to his constantly buzzing phone. Maybe he should have organised his time better. Clay and Nick didn't want to join at this meeting. Sam had dragged them all along to too many this past month. They took this day off.

George didn't like wasting an excuse to transform. To run on the rooftops and feel free in a city that he used to feel trapped in.

He neared the school, and dropped down into an alleyway. One of his favourites, right next to the school, convenient.

"Mask off." He said, and then rushed for his bag that he had hidden earlier, pulling out the things he needed and ditching the rest.

And then he ran.

A civilian run this time. One with panting, a little bit of sweat, more stress and definitely not as fast.

He could hear the music from the school, and he ran quicker, laughing to himself at how ridiculous he must look.

He made it into the school, and ran around the massive building to the field behind it. There were hundreds of people, so many chairs, and a large stage.

"And on that note, we would like to welcome our graduates for 2022."

George ran some more, reaching the audience of parents, and having to run around the side, towards the front with the students. He was near the front somewhere if he remembered correctly. They have had multiple rehearsals of this.

He weaved in between chairs, panting as he did, until he finally found his seat, collapsing into it. He made it somehow. He quickly put his cap on, and readjusted his gown.

Only George would manage to nearly miss his own graduation.

Someone offered him water, and he took it with thanks. They were currently running through all the A's.

"Zak Ahmed."

"Yeah Skeppy!" He heard a few shouts, and joined in with the cheers as his friend walked across

the stage with a big grin.

George turned to look around, and finally made eye contact with Clay, who smiled when George finally noticed him.

*You're an idiot* Clay mouthed from a distance. George rolled his eyes.

*No, you* He mouthed back while pointing.

"Nick Armstrong."

George turned back around and cheered loudly along with several of their friends as the entire audience applauded.

Nick strutted across the stage, smile wide and arms out eager for his certificate. He barely posed for the photo, too eager to just walk away and flick the tassel on his cap from the right to the left. George beamed with pride at his best friend.

They cycled through the A's and began with the B's.

"Clay Block."

The blonde boy couldn't help but smile at the applause for him. Just for him, as he walked across the stage towards the principle.

He looked back at the students still waiting, making eye contact with George and shooting him a wink. He then looked out across the sea of people.

He found his sister immediately, who was standing on a chair screaming for him. Beside her were the Davidson's, all cheering and clapping for him, and Clay's heart swelled as he looked at the people he now called his family.

"Congratulations Clay." The principle shook his hand, and Clay had to bite back his own tears.

He had made it through the year. A whole year of uncertainty and fear. And he ended up at the end with the love of his life, his sister safe, people who care about him, and a city free from danger.

"Thank you." He shook her hand and took his certificate.

He walked off the end of the other stage, where Nick was ready to greet him, hugging him tightly.

"Congratulations, Dream." Nick whispered.

"And you, Sapnap." Clay patted him on the back.

It felt like time equally went super slow but also way too fast to prepare as it cycled through the Bs, Cs and then the beginning of Ds.

Then again, maybe that's just what life feels like. George certainly didn't think high school by any means went quickly. But it also went way too fast for comfort.

"George Davidson."

He also wished he had his crutches at that moment. Something to keep him steady.

He walked the stage, the noise of the audience and his peers being drowned out slightly as he

approached the principle.

He didn't even think he'd make it to graduation. He thought by this point he'd either have dropped out or been killed. But he was here, in one piece. With his friends, his family, and his city in one piece. Somehow. He even accepted his offer for college, now he could think about a future outside of this city.

He saw his family of course in the crowd. Loud and supportive, as always. He wouldn't ask for anything less.

George had somehow survived a year dealing with sleep, senior year, villain attacks, mental health, friendships, prom, and love. But he was standing on the stage at his own graduation, looking out at a sea of people all clapping for him.

All clapping for George. George Davidson. Not GNotFound. For George.

And maybe if they knew, they'd clap a little louder, give him a bigger certificate, thank him instead of congratulate him. But George wanted just this. As normal and as typical as it could get. Because it was still his moment.

He barely even made it down the steps at the other side, because Nick all but grabbed him and pulled him, nearly making him trip.

"Nick! Shit, ow." George stuck his fingers into his mouth the second he felt the stinging.

"What?"

"Your certificate attacked me." George held up the small cut.

"That's a paper cut, George." Nick laughed.

"Paper cuts are lethal." George shoved him. Nick just rolled his eyes, and then pulled George into a bone-crushing hug. George could only laugh, and hug back just as tight.

"I never thought I'd actually make it to graduation." Nick said, a small laugh.

"Me neither. But here we are." George pulled back. "And I never would have reached this point if it weren't for you."

"You basically dragged me by my ankles to get here. All the way from fucking middle school." Nick said, the tears in his eyes making George well up too.

"You're my best friend. Always will be. I love you, Pandas." George said.

Nick's lip trembled, before he grinned and pulled George in again with a watery laugh.

"I love you so much, Gogy." Nick whispered, squeezing him a little tighter.

When they broke apart, George barely had time to breathe, before he was pulled away, picked up and swung around in the air. He screamed and laughed at the surprise.

He was swung around a couple times before being gently placed back on his feet by Clay. The dirty blonde looked down at George between their caps with so much adoration and pride that George felt like crying again at just that.

"You did it." Clay said, reaching up to move George's tassel to the other side.



"We did it, Dream." George smiled.

And he kissed him like the world was theirs.

•

"Come here, G!" Dream shouted, and George screamed, jumping onto the side of a building and climbing up the windows. He heard Dream just below him.

"I don't like this game!" George shouted, reaching the top and jumping off onto a lower building.

"It's called Manhunt! It's fun!" Dream shouted after him.

"No, no it really isn't when you're the one being chased." George jumped from building to building, feet careful on the bricks.

"Fine. You chase me." Dream said, and George looked back over his shoulder to see the boy had stopped running, hands in the air.

"Ok. Fine." He paused for a seconds. "Go!" He ran at Dream, who gasped and turned around.

"You didn't give me any warning!" Dream slid down a pole to about halfway down a building before launching across to another one.

"No grace periods here!" George cackled like a maniac, jumping after the boy.

Their laughs and screams echoed through the still-aching city, the destruction of Doomsday had left a stain that cannot be removed.

But the laughter from the two teenagers who sacrificed everything for them, which echoed through the streets and off of buildings, was maybe just enough for the city to finally heal.

The birds moved for them, the wind helped them jump. The moon lit up the rooftops and the stars gave them hope.

"I can smell you!" George cackled, right behind Dream. While the dirty blonde jumped onto a lower roof, George jumped to the right onto a taller one, and ran ahead, jumping down onto the boy on the next roof over.

"Gotcha!" George shouted as he landed.

But Dream disappeared beneath him.

"Dream! You idiot! You cheated!" George stood up, yelling across the rooftops.

"Worth it." The voice came from above, and George was quick enough to dodge out of the way of the falling green boy.

"That's not fair." George whined, and Dream just laughed, grabbing George's hands and pulling him no to an embrace.

"*I've got you.*" He teased, and George rolled his eyes. Dream pulled George to sit on the edge of the barrier on the roof.

"Look." Dream pointed, his hand with his twinkling Emerald outstretched.

"The *moon*, yes." George said like he was talking to a kid. "Good job, Clay!"

"No, not the moon." Dream nudged him with his shoulder. "Beyond the moon."

"I can't see beyond the moon." George rolled his eyes. Clay just smiled, and wrapped an arm around George's waist, pulling him into his side. George let his head fall against his shoulder, and Clay let his fall against his.

"Mask off." Clay whispered.

"Yes! Your face!" George reached up and squeezed Clay's cheeks. The dirty blonde pushed his hands off with a smile.

"Let me see yours too, then." Clay teased, poking the goggles.

"Mask off." George beamed, his smile remaining the same while his hair and clothes shifted, his eyes being revealed.

"So what is behind the moon, then?" George asked, looking back at the sky. Clay followed his gaze.

"Another world."

"Like this one?"

"No, but we have each other in that one as well. We find each other in every world." Clay said, and George hummed, so Clay looked back at him. The beautiful boy beside him.

"I don't know how it took me so long to realise who you were." Clay chuckled softly, a hand coming up to push stray hair behind his ear, bringing George's attention back as well. Clay could see the stars and moon reflecting in his dark eyes.

"Me too, I guess. Maybe we were just blind. Or idiots." George said.

"Or both."

"Probably both." George laughed lightly. "But I don't mind. We got here in the end."

"I think we got to where we are now, at the perfect time. Any earlier, and it would have been more messier, you know? I got to fall for both versions of you before knowing the truth." Clay said.

"Yeah. We got lucky" George said with a nod.

"I wouldn't say it was *luck*."

"What would you call it then?"

"Growth." Clay shrugged. "I think we grew up. Dealt with our own stuff, learned new things, made mistakes, had hope and yeah... we reached a point where we were finally ready for each other."

"Why did it have to take so long though?" George pouted. Clay just laughed, wrapping his arms around George again, feeling the warmth of his skin and the distant sound of his heartbeat. The wind was cool, but they had each other for warmth.

"I don't know." Clay chuckled.

"I guess that's what makes a good story, though." George then said.

"Does it?"

"Adventure. Pain. Love. Heartbreak. Hope. The best kind of stories are the ones that feel like they last forever." George said.

"Then why did ours have to take so long?" Clay pressed his nose against George's cheek.

"I think it was the most realistic. Our story bloomed when we were finally ready."

"You're telling me that a love-square, secret identities and superpowers is a realistic story?" Clay asked.

"No." George laughed softly. "Of course not. But the confusion, and pain, and heartbreak and love was. We were figuring out life and love just like anyone else."

"So maybe we are actually ordinary." Clay said, pressing a soft kiss against George's warm lips. The boy smiled against him before pulling away, meeting his eyes with a thumb brushing against his cheek.

"Ordinary is all I ever wanted to be." George whispered back.

"You're just an ordinary superhero." Clay teased, trying to kiss George again, but the boy pulled back with a smile.

"Yeah. What is it you're always telling me?" George said.

"That I love you?"

"Well, yes, and I love you too. But not that." He bumped his nose against Clay's with a small smile.

"Tell me then." Clay closed his eyes. "What do I tell you?"

George looked at the boy in front of him. Clay's eyes were closed, but the look on his face was pure contentment. His smile was light and pure, his freckles were bright in the moonlight, his hair was blowing in the breeze.

George cupped his face, and closed his eyes as well, lips brushing against Dream's in a matching soft smile.

"Your jewel isn't what makes you extraordinary.  
It's your heart that makes you *Super*."

## Chapter End Notes

We did it.

Finally. I started Super on the 7th March 2021. And it is officially completed on the 26th May 2022. (I started updating on Wattpad before transferring over here so the date is a little off) It is about 375k words in total, each chapter ranging from 4-10k words (excluding this one).

This chapter is about 14.5k, the longest chapter yet but we had a lot to address. I just want to preface, again, that there are probably a lot of mistakes. Let me know of any, I wrote most of this at 2am. Also I am literally sitting in my uni car park, so I won't be able to reply to comments for a while. But I will try to respond to everyone.

Weekly updates, every wednesday (just about) and I honestly have no idea how I actually physically wrote this much. It was meant to be <100k words but I guess I got carried away. I wrote the entire thing on my phone as well, my poor pinkies are deceased. I get asked a lot how I didn't lose motivation or get writers block. Trust me, I did. One point it was quite bad. But I had a plan for the entire story, so I never lost sight of where I was heading.

If you managed to stick with me since beginning, I applaud your patience. If you joined in somewhere along the way, thank you so much for giving this story a chance.

I know it was long, and painful, but I hope it was rewarding in the end. I could keep going forever, but George and Dream's story had to come to an end at some point. I really feel like I watched them grow up. My favourite part of writing is character development, and I think I achieved that. Look at how far they have both come since Chapter 1. I created these characters and I feel like they are my children and honestly, I'm a little emotional.

Before I even uploaded the first chapter, I had pre-written the first 25 chapters. And throughout the story, I was always at least 10 chapters ahead. Until, of course, towards the end where I just genuinely was running out of physical time in my life.

There's so much I want to tell you all, all the things I nearly included in this story, the things I deleted. I had a whole several chapters where George nearly drowned and Clay saved him, realising he loved him. Or the alternate ending I wrote 5 entire chapters for, where George found out Clay was Dream first.

On twitter, I will do a post in like a day or two where you can ask me questions in the replies and I'll answer them all. Maybe about how I wrote it, what happened after the ending, where did a certain character go, which characters I loved or hated, why I (Lottiara) am so amazing, I know, I know. I am pretty cool (/j)

@/LottiaraT is my Twitter. You can follow me here.

I do have a new book coming, I want to estimate a few weeks, maybe a month? But I need to recover from Super. It was weekly for over a year. But surprisingly, I'm not sick of writing. My new stories will be multi chapter of course, but they will not be this long. Whether that's a good or bad thing, you can tell me.

Once again, I want to thank each every one of you. Whether you were here from the beginning, joined at the end, are only now just reading this a month after it finished. Whether you were a regular commenter, or a silent reader, follow me on twitter or joined the Discord. Thank you. All of you. I never thought we'd get here, it's insane. And the fact that people have made artwork for this stupid little story is even more incredible.

I love the small community we made, and our shared love of *Super Wednesdays*. I don't think I'll ever be able to express how much you all mean to me, and how much

you've brightened my year.

I hope you all have wonderful days, and nights, and weeks, and years.

And remember,

*You don't need superpowers to be Super.*

And you all are in my eyes.

-Lottie :)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!